THE HISTORY OF LIBRARIES IN PLYMOUTH TO 1914:

a study of the library developments in the Three Towns of Plymouth, Devonport and Stonehouse which amalgamated into Plymouth in 1914.

Thesis submitted for the External Degree of
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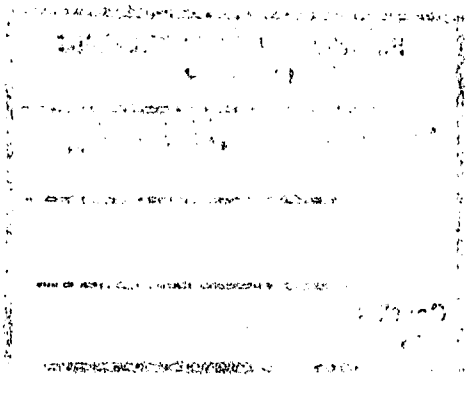
by Margaret Ivy Lattimore



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ABSTRACT

The individual and collective history and character of the Three Towns is outlined, with special reference to factors affecting their potential as library environments. The libraries are then presented by type, each type being introduced by an appropriate sketch of the national setting and specialist local background, followed by accounts of individual libraries. The libraries are mostly post-1800, and the main types are: commercial subscription, private subscription, literary and philosophical, mechanics' institutes, cooperative, rate-supported, school, scientific, medical, law and naval libraries. The general conclusions reached are: that the Three Towns contained a number of libraries which were amongst the earliest of their type; that they also contained good examples of types of libraries which have received comparatively little professional attention, such as cooperative and naval libraries; and that W.H.K. Wright, the Borough Librarian of Plymouth 1876-1915, was one of the most important provincial founder-members of the Library Association and deserves greater recognition for his work in promoting the public library movement. At the regional level, it is concluded that the Three Towns, led by old Plymouth, often pioneered library developments in Devon and Cornwall. At the local level, it is concluded that although the Three Towns were contiguous and occupied only a small geographical area, nevertheless they did exhibit some interesting differences in their respective library developments which can be attributed to specialist factors in their individual histories and characters. For all of these reasons, the pre-1914 library history of the modern City of Plymouth is significant and deserves to be better known in the professional literature.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ADM.	Admiralty
B.L.	British Library
B.M.	British Museum
Cat.	Catalogue
C.C.E.	Committee of Council on Education
C.R.O.	Cornwall County Record Office
D.B.C.	Devonport Borough Council
D.C.M.L.	Devonport Civil and Military Library
D.C.N.H.S.	Devon and Cornwall Natural History Society
D.F.P.L.	Devonport Free Public Library
D.I.	*Devonport independent*
D.M.I.	Devonport Mechanics' Institute
D.P.T.	*Devonport and Plymouth telegraph*
D.R.O.	Devon Record Office
D.T.P.C.	*Devonport telegraph and Plymouth chronicle*
E.S.T.C.	Eighteenth-century Short Title Catalogue
I.L.S.P.	Incorporated Law Society of Plymouth
J.	*Journal*
L.A.	Library Association
M.B.A.	Marine Biological Association
N.M.M.	National Maritime Museum
N. & Q.	*Notes and queries*
P.C.	*Plymouth chronicle*
P.D.S.H.	*Plymouth, Devonport and Stonehouse herald*
P.D.T.	*Plymouth and Dock telegraph*
P.D.W.J.	*Plymouth and Devonport weekly journal*
P.F.P.L.	Plymouth Free Public Library

P.L.S.	Plymouth Law Society
P.M.C.I.S.	Plymouth Mutual Cooperative and Industrial Society
P.M.I.	Plymouth Mechanics' Institute
P.M.S.	Plymouth Medical Society
P.P.	*Parliamentary papers*
P.R.O.	Public Record Office
P.S.D.M.R.S.	Plymouth Stonehouse and Devonport Medical Reading Society
P.T.	*Plymouth times*
R.D.T.P.C.	*Royal Devonport telegraph and Plymouth chronicle*
R.N.E.C.	Royal Naval Engineering College
R.N.H.P.	Royal Naval Hospital Plymouth
T.D.A.	*Transactions of the Devonshire Association*
T.P.I.	*Transactions of the Plymouth Institution*
W.D.M.	*Western daily mercury*
W.D.R.O.	West Devon Record Office
W.M.N.	*Western morning news*
WO	War Office

Abbreviations used for the numerous guidebooks and directories relating to the Three Towns will be found in the bibliography of those works on pages 662-663.

CHAPTER ONE. GENERAL INTRODUCTION.

The title of this study, *The history of libraries in Plymouth to 1914*, appears to be quite simple and straight-forward upon superficial consideration, but the sub-title provides the clue that the subject to be considered is perhaps more complicated - *"a study of the library developments in the Three Towns of Plymouth, Devonport and Stonehouse which amalgamated into Plymouth in 1914"*. The purpose of this chapter is to explain the terms and limitations specified in the title and to describe general aspects of the research which will help to explain certain features of the main study presented in the following chapters.

The first point to be considered must be the geographical limitation of the study, for it will have been noticed that the name "Plymouth" occurs in both the title and sub-title in a way which might seem contradictory or confusing to a reader not familiar with the area. The explanation is simple. The name "Plymouth" often occurs as part of the title of proper authorities, such as the Port of Plymouth, the City of Plymouth, or, historically, the Borough of Plymouth, which are often referred to colloquially as just "Plymouth; but "Plymouth" in the context of this study has a precise meaning. This can be shown most conveniently by reference to Fig. 1, which shows the stages of development of the modern conurbation which forms the City of Plymouth. This study is concerned with the area shown within the 1914 boundary, and it therefore forms a history of libraries of the City of Plymouth up to that date, as indicated by the title. Inside the 1914 boundary there can be seen three distinct nuclei, popularly known as "The Three Towns", which by 1914 had developed into three separate local government units, viz. the old County Borough of Plymouth, the County Borough of Devonport, and the Urban District of East Stonehouse. The growth of each nucleus together with the growth of urbanisation between and around them had virtually transformed the Three Towns by the late nineteenth-century into a single conurbation with many overlapping interests and some frictions. In 1914 these three local government units were amalgamated into the new County Borough of Plymouth. This study is concerned only with the period up to 1914, so when the name "Plymouth" is used in the text it normally refers to the old, pre-1914 County Borough of Plymouth - and its earlier stages of

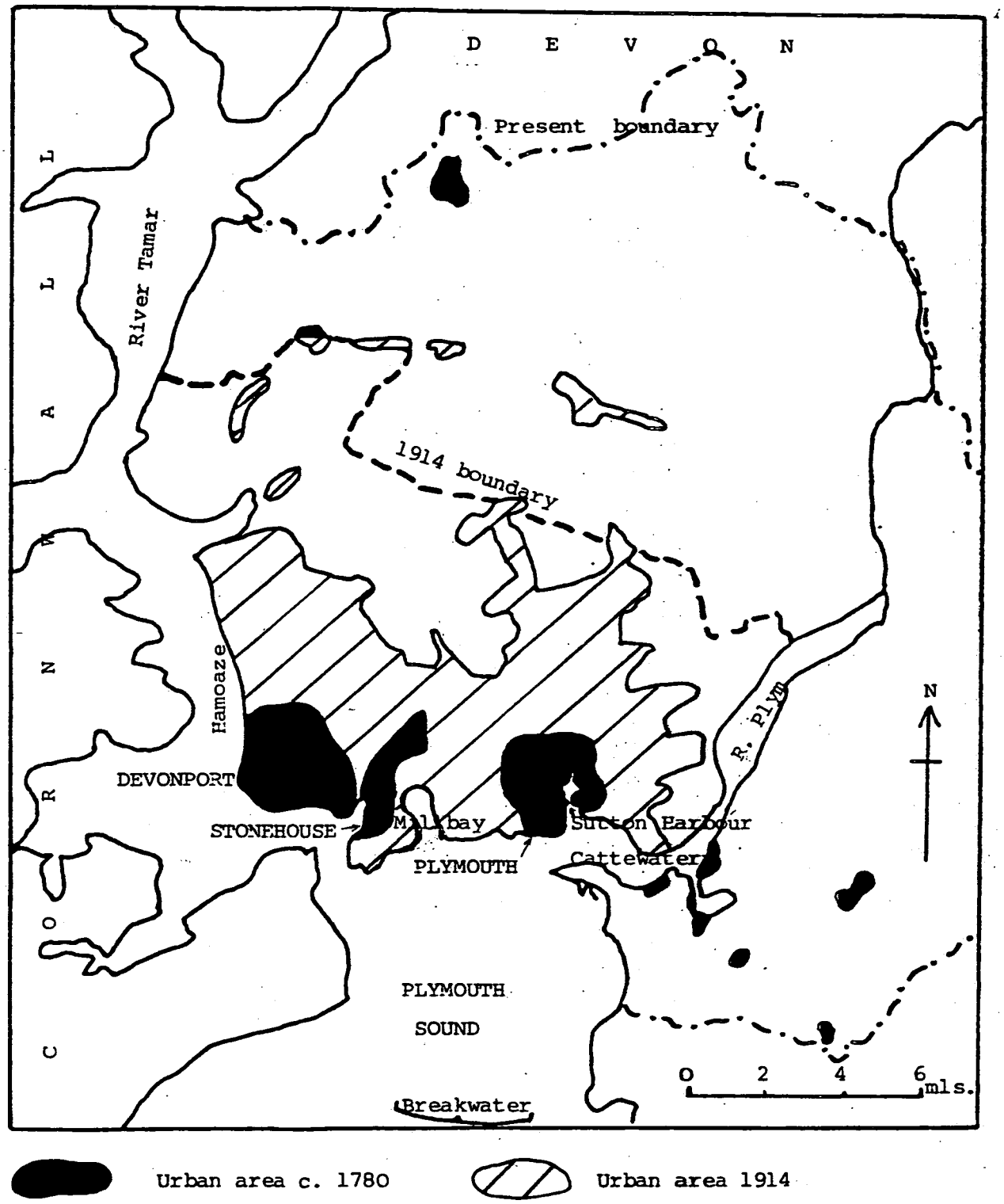


Fig. 1 Stages in the growth of the City of Plymouth.

development - unless the name is qualified or otherwise made clear from the context.

The next brief consideration is the chronological limit. It can be seen from Fig. 1 that the modern City of Plymouth contains nearly four times the area of its 1914 boundary, and although a study of the total library history of the City was contemplated it was felt that the geographical and chronological scope was too great for a single study unless treated very superficially. The year 1914 was the natural choice for the chronological limit because it marked both a local and a national turning point which affected libraries. World War I had a marked effect on all kinds of libraries in respect of resources, staff and user communities, and in retrospect 1914 marked the end of an era of lingering Victorianism. At the local level, the amalgamation of the Three Towns inevitably affected the major libraries, the rate-supported public libraries, with the requirement for equalisation of services throughout the new authority.

The third aspect of the title which requires some explanation is the phrase "history of libraries", although this has to be approached with caution because, as Hagler argues, "library history" and analogous terms almost wholly elude definition (1). Many library history books have been published which contain no attempt by their authors to define such a general term, and indeed it can often be unnecessary when the work treats libraries of the types which either *are* or *are not* in existence and have little in the grey areas from which recognisable libraries might emerge; or again, works which draw upon established studies and well-known examples of libraries. At the local level, however, when dealing with the origins and causes of library development, the grey areas can be wide and difficult ground unless some form of guideline is adopted to focus a potentially diffuse study; and a brief consideration will be given to each of the terms "library" and "history" with some indication of their intention and interpretation in this study.

The word "library" means to the layman either a place set apart to contain books (2) or a collection of books (3), usually referred to colloquially as "the library" or having the word "library" as part of its official title. Whilst such simple definitions would

include a large percentage of the collections described in this work, they are not satisfactory to the professional librarian. As Professor Irwin has written:

> "A library, ... is something much more than a shelf of books, or a press, or even a great book-lined reading room. Without its owner, without its users, it is dead." (4)

Libraries cannot be defined in terms of books, for they contain non-book materials such as the newspapers and magazines which were so important particularly in the nineteenth-century. Nor can they be defined in terms of size, for a small private library of very few volumes can be as important in the early seventeenth-century as a multi-thousand volume private library of nineteenth-century landowners. The existence of a place or collection of books is not adequate - how were they obtained, organised, used, maintained? Yet some means must be introduced for distinguishing that which is worthy of study from the booktrade and from the scatter of odd volumes found in private hands. As a broad guideline, a modified version of Johnson's definition of a library (5) has been adopted, viz.:

- a collection of works of recorded human experience, information and imagination
- in graphic form
- brought together for a specific purpose
- arranged for easy use
- cared for by a person familiar with its contents and arrangement
- and available for use, by at least a limited number of people.

This seemed to have sufficient flexibility to cover not only the traditionally obvious but also the unexpected, and librarianship is implicit within it; but it must be emphasised that this is only a guide-line for this study, not a rigid definition, and it must be anticipated that in many cases there will be insufficient information about an organisation to be able to apply all of these criteria - but sometimes it might be helpful to be able to apply even only one or two when there is an element of doubt over the inclusion or exclusion of material. Finally, it should be noted here that the above guideline is concerned with the distinction between a library and a non-library, so to speak. Libraries have been grouped conveniently within the study so that like can be considered with like; this division has been based on common characteristics, and use has been made of existing studies such as Kelly's work on endowed and subscription libraries (6). Definitions of types of libraries will be considered in the appropriate chapters.

What is meant by the word "history" in connection with libraries? Irwin described this briefly but comprehensively when he wrote:

> "In the history of libraries we are concerned particularly with their purpose and their content, and with the social background which produced them; in consequence we become involved in the history not only of scholarship in its narrower sense, but of human civilization and culture and literacy." (7)

The history of libraries involves the potential interplay of a number of factors (8) of which some of the most evident are:

- the growth of a community sufficiently stable and complex to need to create, store and retrieve graphic materials, for example towns, churches, central government
- the advent of literacy
- the spread of literacy through education and the creation of a demand for reading material
- the availability of books i.e. the booktrade
- economic factors - who needs and who can afford books?
- social factors - who has leisure to read and suitable home conditions in which to pursue the activity in comfort?
- the literature market
- and individual initiative, which is one of the most exciting aspects of library history because it can give rise to the unexpected.

These and other factors will be examined as appropriate in order to try and understand the purpose and content of the libraries in addition to documenting their existence.

Some indication has now been given of the general interpretation to be placed upon the terms of the title and subtitle of this study; but why were the Three Towns selected in the first place? An underlying reason was the author's previous interest in the geography and local history of the area, from which sprang an awareness of the most important reason, that no serious study had been made of library developments within the City of Plymouth and that this gap provided an opportunity to make a definite contribution to knowledge by the discovery of new facts. A third reason was curiosity about the way in which libraries of the Three Towns might relate to general library movements in Great Britain. For example, the old town of Plymouth

has figured prominently in national history; would its libraries prove to be of similar importance in library history? Or was the geographical position too remote in the far Southwest for the Three Towns to share in contemporary library movements? A fourth reason for selecting this geographical area was that it provided an unusual opportunity to study in detail the library development of not just one but of *three* contiguous local government areas, the centres of which were within easy walking distances from each other. Did different factors operate in these three separate but adjacent urban communities to produce different emphases or types of library provision? Although library bibliographies have been searched and many library history studies examined in the course of this research, none have been found with quite this approach. An additional incentive to the selection of the Three Towns as the subject of study was the challenge posed by the special research problems, which will be described later. The selection of the Plymouth area for a library history study therefore appeared to be justified in both academic and professional terms because it provided the opportunity to contribute new knowledge and the possibility of some new interpretations, and the purpose of the study can be summarised as follows. Within the geographical and chronological limitations of the 1914 boundary of the City of Plymouth, the aims are:

1. To discover the facts of library history.
2. To attempt to understand the causes and reasons behind the facts.
3. To relate the local library development very broadly to the national trends and regional developments of the different types of library.
4. To compare and contrast, in so far as this might prove feasible, the library provision made in the contiguous Three Towns, and to attempt to explain any significant differences which might be found.

It is hoped that in attempting to fulfil these aims the study will provide a unit of basic research (9) which, with others of its kind, will in turn provide material for the general histories and comparative studies which are still needed to fill the many gaps in British library history.

Busha and Harter have pointed out quite rightly that research methods in librarianship borrow from and are entwined with those of other professions and disciplines (10); but in a library history research project the basic method must inevitably be that of the historical method, which has been well described by many eminent historians such as Bloch (11), Gottschalk (12), Hockett (13) and Langlois & Seignobos (14). In essence, it consists of the following steps : the collection of data; the establishment of the validity of the data; the interpretation of the data; and the presentation of that interpretation. This immediately throws into relief the special problem, mentioned previously, faced by anyone who wishes to research into the history of the City of Plymouth. That is, the wholesale destruction of records, buildings and contents during the frequent bombing during World War II and in particular the virtual razing of the City Centre during March and April 1941. The records of the Three Towns had already suffered the usual attrition which affects records over the centuries due to carelessness, ignorance, neglect and fire (15); but quite substantial records had survived until the concentrated destruction of the Blitz. Among the wartime losses were: Plymouth Proprietary Library building, records and stock; Plymouth Cooperative Library building, records and stock; Plymouth Public Library building, records, and most of the stock; and Plymouth Guildhall and other civic offices in which most of the old Plymouth records were held, together with the Devonport municipal records which had been transferred there after the amalgamation of 1914. Consequently many of the primary materials which are usually available from at least the late nineteenth-century in other urban areas - even if they are not complete - are not available for the Three Towns. Virtually every library suffered some loss and damage even if it escaped destruction. This problem of deficient records is, of course, common in library history research; as Kelly has pointed out, many libraries do not even now keep adequate records of their own progress and the task of writing a library's history becomes more difficult with every year that passes! (16). The problem of deficient records in relation to the libraries of the Three Towns is not unique; but it has to be taken into account because it is an exceptionally acute form of the common problem and has side effects. In particular, secondary sources have inevitably been more important than would normally be the case, often providing the sole evidence for the existence of a library.

Hagler has written that "Gaps in documentation do not preclude accurate historical reconstruction ..." (17); but the degree of accuracy in the reconstruction must inevitably be suspect when it is not possible to obtain a cross check on information supplied by a single source, and a secondary one at that. Fortunately, however, this has not caused too many problems in the course of the research. Usually dates and names have been found to be reasonably accurate when cross checks were possible, and in the early history, for example in the section on commercial subscription libraries, at least a reference in a secondary source has the merit of establishing that the library did exist, even if there is an element of doubt as to whether the year was, say, 1821 or 1822. Although chronological accuracy is important when it can be achieved, sometimes a firm indication accurate to within a year or two is not unacceptable especially in the earlier period. Plagiarism was rife, but is quite easily detected and discounted from all but the earliest source. No doubt the survival of more primary sources and a wider range of secondary sources would have resulted in a study which would have been far more rounded and balanced, but the partial framework which has been reconstructed seems to be fairly sound when tested against other studies of similar types of library. However, it must always be remembered that what has been recovered and reconstructed is only a part of that which did occur and exist. Despite extensive searches locally, nationally and internationally, for copies of local library publications which were known to have been produced, very few have been located; but there is still a chance that some might exist in unrecorded or inaccessible sources which might in due course shed more light or cause some modification to the findings presented in this study. There is also the possibility that stray books from the old libraries might turn up in unexpected locations and provide evidence of such matters as their provenance and administration, such as that obtained from the books of the Medical Library at the Royal Naval Hospital (Chapter 9.4). Although literary evidence has been very important, it has been supplemented by the evidence gathered by other methods such as oral history, and the computer analysis of data collected from surviving books; and any special methodology is indicated in the relevant sections.

Turning from the problems of data collection, validation and interpretation, it remains to explain some of the considerations which have affected the presentation of this work. During the whole time of the research there was an ever-present problem of balance, and the reader will become aware that there is a deliberate imbalance in the presentation of some sections. The reason is as follows. The frequently recurring difficulty experienced during the research was to determine the cut-off point of the research when, in order to interpret a fact of local library development, it was found that the avenue of knowledge necessary for its explanation - academic, professional, or local history - had either not yet been researched, or had not been sufficiently researched so as to provide a reliable context against which local libraries could be compared or a framework into which they could be inserted. To research such avenues completely would have resulted in a number of separate theses! No uniform solution to this problem was possible, and each case was decided on its own merits. A few examples will illustrate the point. At the local level, many aspects of life in the Three Towns have not been researched, for example, the systematic history of their schools (18) but this was essential background for an understanding of the Plymouth School Library Service and therefore had to be investigated in order to obtain at least an outline development, which is consequently presented in the text. At the regional level, there are very few studies relating to libraries in Devon and Cornwall except those of Exeter (19), and some considerable time was spent in obtaining an indicative outline of the library history of these counties to gain some understanding of the libraries of the Three Towns in their regional setting. At the national level library history is still a comparatively young subject and many types of library have not yet been professionally researched adequately to provide a background against which local findings could be compared; for example, libraries of the Army, Navy and Royal Marines. The importance of the Armed Services in the Three Towns and the slight local traces of their libraries seemed to justify considerable original research into these types of library in order to understand the local phenomenon. The results have been presented in some detail. On the other hand, the development of the rate-supported public library movement is well documented in many library history publications, and the author has therefore considered it unnecessary to provide a detailed introduction at the beginning of the chapter on the Three Towns public

libraries, but has selected and sketched in a few paragraphs that which seems important in relation to local developments. From these examples it will be seen that the imbalance which exists in the presentation of contextual material is very closely related to the second and third aims of the study, viz. to attempt to understand the causes and reasons behind the facts, and to relate the local library development very broadly to the national and regional context, and the fulfillment of those aims has been considered of greater importance than the theoretically desirable uniform balance of presentation.

The organisation of the contents of this thesis presented two main alternatives: to present each of the Three Towns and its libraries in turn; or to take the whole geographical area of the Three Towns and deal in turn with each type of library across it. The latter proved the more satisfactory arrangement, but it has been organised in such a way that the individual developments in each of the Three Towns can be identified fairly readily within each chapter or section.

The study falls into three main divisions. Chapter 2 introduces the Three Towns, their national, regional and local setting, their individual histories and characters, and some of the main factors which were potential influences on library development, such as the population growth, education, social conditions, booktrade, and so on. Chapters 3 to 11 contain systematic accounts of the libraries identified in the period up to 1914. The arrangement is broadly chronological for the earliest libraries, and by library type for the later period. Each type of library is normally introduced by a sketch of its national development and the regional and local setting before each individual library is examined. Chapter 12 summarises the findings and highlights particular points of comparison or contrast which emerge. Finally, the Appendix contains maps which will be found useful for reference purposes throughout this work.

CHAPTER TWO. THE THREE TOWNS

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the general context in which the libraries detailed in subsequent chapters were established, developed and flourished or failed. After a general consideration of the geographical setting of the Three Towns, each town will be examined in turn, outlining its history and general character. Finally, some of the factors which might be expected to influence libraries most strongly will be considered, together with any interesting differences in their operation in the Three Towns, for example, occupations, literacy, and the book trade.

2.1 THE GEOGRAPHICAL SETTING

Physical geography exercises an influence on cultural history, although this becomes less obvious as the development of technology brought about faster communications, reduced isolation, and enabled men to make their own mark on the landscape and control much of its use. The Three Towns have an interesting geographical situation. They are sited on a peninsula between the mouths of the rivers Tamar and Plym (Fig. 1), and are within the administrative County of Devon - but only just, for the River Tamar marks the boundary between Devon and Cornwall. The County of Devon itself falls on the broad dividing line which geographically distinguishes the "Highland Zone" from the "Lowland Zone" (Fig. 2). Fox, in his *Personality of Britain* (1), showed how the structure of Britain has exerted a powerful influence on culture, and although his study is concerned with prehistory, the influence can be traced also behind later cultural history. The general character of the "Highland Zone" is one in which high plateaux and mountains provide difficult relief, a poorer economy, a dependence upon the sea for communication and a sense of isolation in its small communities. The "Lowland Zone" generally provides a relief with few obstacles to communication, more fertile and habitable ground, with wealthier populations. Something of this contrast can be perceived in the earlier history of Devon. In the east of the County the provincial capital of Exeter shared the general character of the "Lowland Zone", with easy communications with the rest of England and able to share in general cultural

Fig. 2 Highland and Lowland zones of Britain.

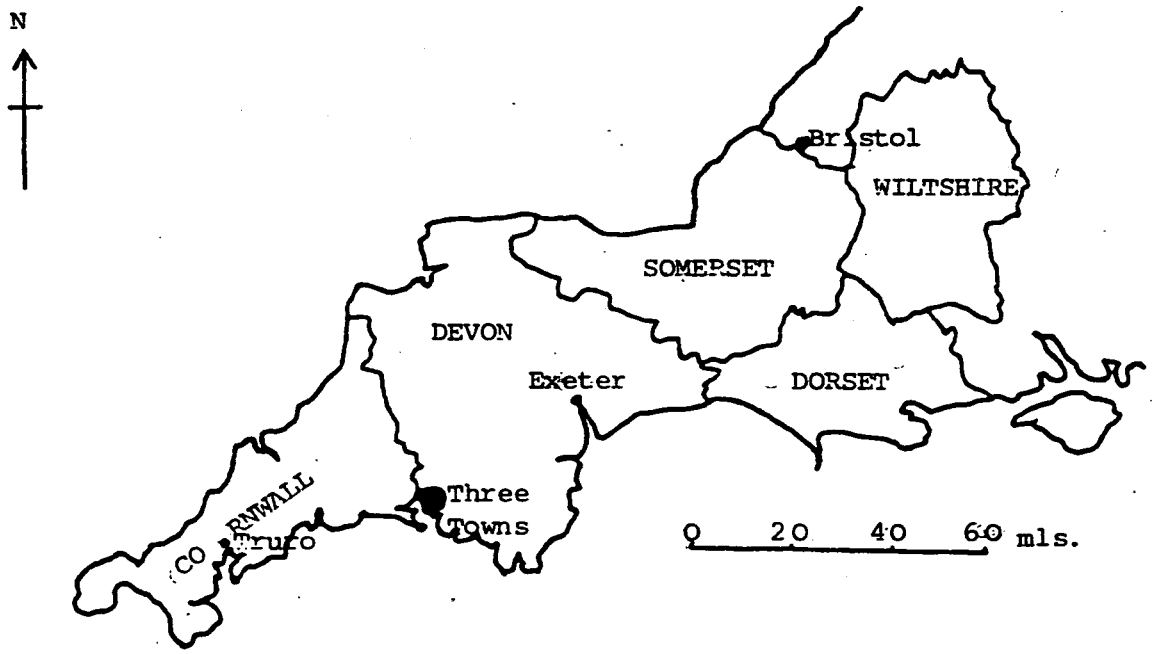


Fig. 3 The traditional Southwest region.

developments spreading from it. West of Exeter, there was Dartmoor, a hostile land barrier. Routes had to be taken around it, usually to the north because the alternative route along the southern flanks meant fording several rivers. The relief of the forty miles between the Three Towns and Exeter did not provide easy communication found in similar distances in lowland Britain, and this makes the cultural development less predictable in the days before modern fast land communications. Ideas, such as the establishment of a type of library, might spread from a centre such as London by ripples to Exeter; but the idea might reach the Three Towns by land much later, by sea direct from London much earlier, or a similar idea might be developed independently in the area itself.

The effect of geography on the history of libraries is a subject which would probably repay detailed study with respect to the period before about 1800, for it is interesting to notice in the library histories of Great Britain how often an early development seems to have been engendered in the "Highland Zone". The purpose here, however, is simply to convey the idea that it would be as well not to expect the Three Towns to show as close a relationship with the general development of libraries in England as is shown by Exeter. Very little work has been carried out into the history of libraries in Devon and Cornwall, apart from Exeter (2), but a preliminary survey by the author has indicated a marked late development of libraries in Cornwall and a marked early individual stamp on those which were established, such as the Cornwall County Library in 1794 (3). East of Dartmoor, on the other hand, there seem to occur libraries which are contemporary with and similar to others in England, for example, parochial and subscription libraries which will be mentioned again in the appropriate chapters. The Three Towns are situated between these two somewhat different areas, and it might reasonably be expected that they will at the very least show some interesting library developments.

The geographical situation in the far southwest of England combined with the fine natural harbours provided at the estuaries of the Plym and Tamar was turned to early advantage, and commercial and military maritime affairs have been pursued with vigour, bringing about a large centre of population. Table 1 shows the population of the Three Towns according to the Census figures 1801 - 1911, and

the total county figures for Devon and Cornwall have been given for comparison, together with the figures for Exeter, the provincial capital which was also the seat of the Diocese covering Cornwall until 1876. It will be seen that although the populations of the individual towns of Plymouth, Devonport and Stonehouse were not particularly high, collectively they formed a very large centre of population which by 1911 formed nearly one third of the total population of Devon and was equivalent to about two thirds of the population of Cornwall.

Table 1. Population statistics of the Three Towns and the Counties of Devon and Cornwall, 1801-1911.

Census	Plymouth	Devon-port	Stone-house	Three Towns	Exeter	Devon	Cornwall
1801	16,040	23,747	3,407	43,194	17,398	337,785	192,879
1811	20,803	30,083	5,174	56,060	18,896	381,398	220,477
1821	21,591	33,578	6,043	61,212	23,479	437,559	261,616
1831	31,080	34,883	9,571	75,534	28,201	492,935	301,642
1841	36,520	33,820	9,712	80,052	31,312	532,308	342,333
1851	52,221	38,180	11,979	102,380	32,823	569,072	353,637
1861	62,599	50,440	14,343	127,382	33,738	589,278	364,848
1871	68,833	49,449	14,585	132,867	36,349	606,102	358,356
1881	73,794	48,939	15,041	137,774	37,669	608,400	326,375
1891	84,248	54,803	15,401	154,452	33,404	631,808	322,571
1901	107,636	70,437	15,111	193,184	46,940	664,697	318,591
1911	112,030	81,678	13,748	207,456	48,664	701,981	325,315

Such a large population might be expected to contain within it a complexity of organisation and need which might give rise to a rich variety of libraries, and indeed to take the leadership in such matters in the region influenced by it, which, with the improvement of communication in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth-centuries, and especially the railway extension into Cornwall in 1859, consisted of the western part of Devon and most of Cornwall. Bristol, which is often thought of as the "gateway to the South-West" and to be its major city, was over 100 miles from the Three Towns and too far away to have much influence on Devon and Cornwall. When the regional context of the Three Towns is mentioned in this study, it refers to Devon and Cornwall and not to the five counties (Wiltshire, Dorset, Somerset, Devon and Cornwall) which are grouped as the "Southwest" in the Census and other

official publications (Fig. 3).

The population of the Three Towns formed not only a large regional centre but also one of the largest centres of population in England and Wales. From 1801 - 1841 the Three Towns, under the collective name "Plymouth", were ranked in Census reports as seventh among the principal towns, surpassed only by London, Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham, Bristol and Leeds. As the century wore on, "Plymouth" was passed by other towns and had fallen to seventeenth position by 1911. It is interesting to notice that the places which ranked above and immediately below it in the first half of the nineteenth-century - the latter being Portsmouth, Norwich, Sheffield, Nottingham, Bath, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and Leicester - are all names which are frequently met in the pages of library histories, with one exception, Portsmouth. "Portsmouth/Portsea/Gosport" ranked eighth, next to Plymouth. Is it a matter of total coincidence that these two seaports which have so much in common, (such as being tripartite conurbations, with dual functions of commercial ports and royal dockyards), appear to figure less in library history than the others? Of course, it could be because neither area has been studied adequately to establish any claim to a place in library history commensurate with their importance as population centres. There is, however, another possibility, that for some reason connected with their complex populations and multiple functions, the development of libraries might have been in some way retarded. It is no part of this particular study to investigate Portsmouth, but it will be interesting to establish in the context of the Three Towns whether there were any factors which retarded the development of libraries, for if so, this might be of wider application.

Having thus looked briefly and generally at the situation and the population of the Three Towns in the context of their national and regional setting, it is now necessary to turn to the third geographical aspect which has been selected for consideration in this section, viz. the important subject of transport and communication. Transport and communication can be a very significant factor in the establishment, development and decline of libraries. They are the means by which ideas can be disseminated, by letter, by printed papers and books, and by individual travellers. They are the means by which books and periodicals can be acquired and despatched; by which printing equipment and paper

can be obtained to provide a booktrade of all kinds which can in turn encourage libraries. At the entirely local level, the existence or otherwise of good roads, or bridges, can make a considerable difference up to the late nineteenth-century in the potential catchment area for a proposed society or library. For example, could one establishment serve the Three Towns, or was it essential to have three separate establishments? To what extent might users from outside the Three Towns make use of the facilities in them? Although roads might exist, their condition and route could be important. A route might be perfectly feasible for a middleclass gentleman on horseback who could move from one of the Three Towns to another comparatively quickly and easily to attend a professional gathering; but the same route with steep muddy hills or long detours to cross a creek by the bridge could make it an unreasonable expectation for working men, tired after their day's labour, to go on foot for such distances. With these kinds of consideration in mind, the development of the more important features of transport and communications in the Three Towns will now be outlined. Fig. 4 is a sketch-map showing some of these features, and Maps 1 - 4 have been provided for general reference purposes when places are named throughout the thesis.

The good sea communications of the Three Towns are well-known, first from the reputation of the Elizabethan seamen such as Drake and Hawkins and later the reputation of the royal naval ships using Devonport as their home base. In the days of sailing ships Plymouth Sound provided suitable anchorage for both westbound and eastbound traffic, for they could anchor in the Hamoaze or in the Cattewater and await the appropriate wind. Traffic was conducted both coastwise and overseas in both directions, and the port was made safer with the construction of the Eddystone Lighthouse which was effective from 1759 (former lighthouses were constructed but failed), and the Breakwater which was completed in 1844. The economics of transport usually dictate that low cost transport such as water transport is suitable for moving bulk goods of low value for which speed is not essential, and that when goods are of high value and low bulk it is economic to use faster, more expensive forms of transport, viz. land transport before air transport became available. Until the steam railway was invented there was no single form of transport which could cater for both types of goods economically. Land communications in Devon and Cornwall, however, were comparatively difficult and

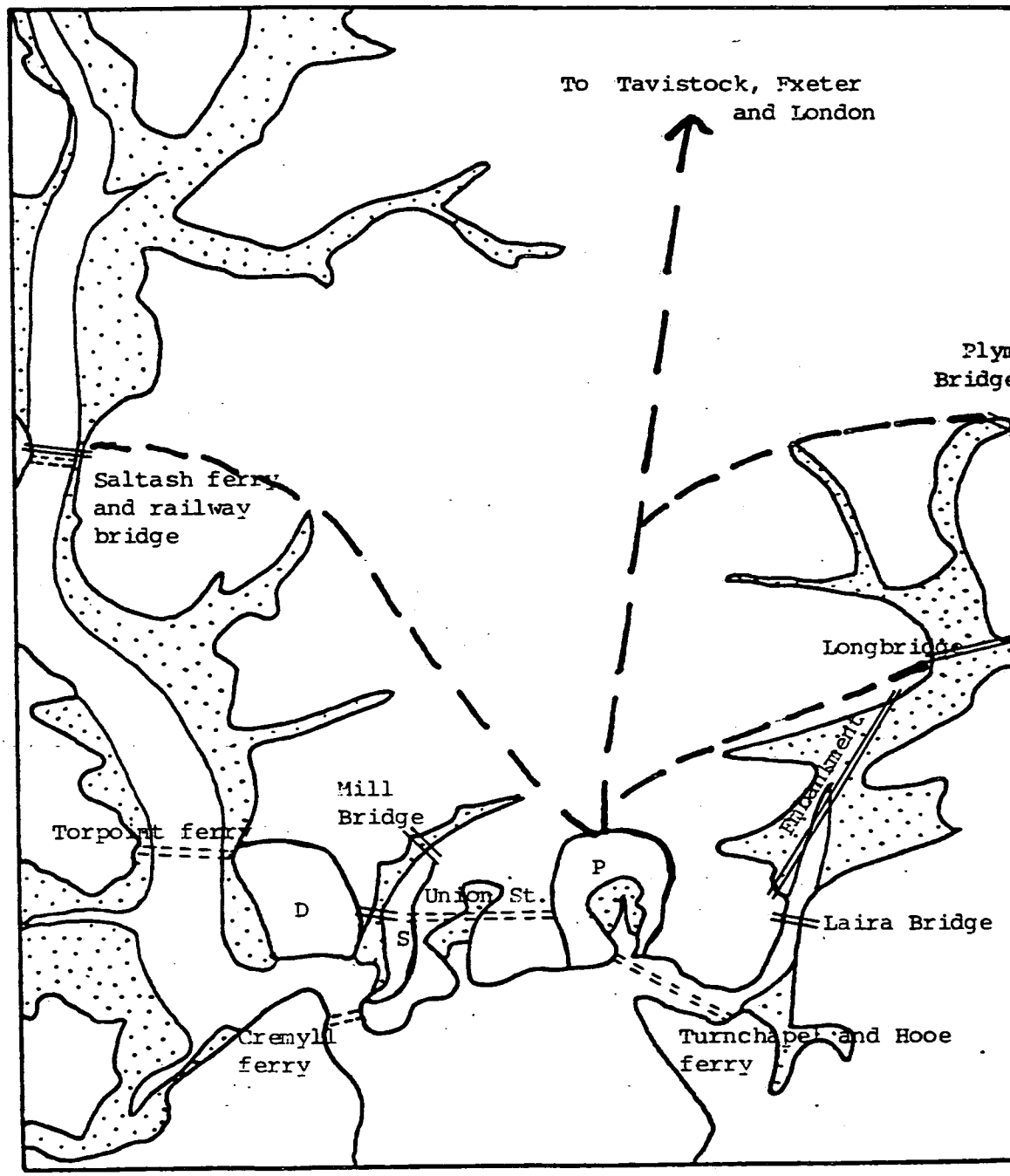


Fig. 4 Sketch plan of road and river communications of the Three Towns.

the theory of sea and land transport economics often was disregarded in practice, with the importation of stationery, books and periodicals taking place via the ports, particularly in west Devon and in Cornwall, and it was in the ports that the booktrade usually became established and developed west of Exeter.

The land communications in and around the Three Towns were difficult until the beginning of many improvements from the mid-eighteenth century onwards. The natural physical geography of the area was a deeply indented peninsula between the rivers Tamar and Plym, and only by travelling north was it possible to leave the Three Towns without crossing rivers and creeks. The medieval roads were packhorse routes which were influenced greatly by topography and were frequently impassable because of the quantity of mud. Packhorse routes led from the town of Plymouth to the ferries at Saltash Passage, Cremyll and Hooe, and the route along the watershed to the north was usually taken as the road to Exeter and London in preference to the southern route around Dartmoor which was reached by a difficult road from Plymouth down steep Lipson Hill, skirting the north side of Lipson Creek, and leading to Efford where it was possible to cross the Plym at low tide or alternatively to the higher crossing at Plym Bridge. It was not until after 1758 that the main road to the east was improved by building an embanked turnpike road which crossed the Plym at Long-bridge. In 1809 the Embankment across Laira marshes provided a new easy alternative to the old Lipson Hill, and in 1863 another new road was opened between Mutley and Crabtree. Until 1827, when the Laira Bridge was built, traffic from Hooe and Oreston had to travel to Plympton in order to reach Plymouth, unless small enough to cross by the ferry at Hooe. On the western side, the path from Plymouth to Devonport was via Mill Bridge until the more convenient Stonehouse Bridge was opened in 1773, after which horsedrawn vehicles soon began to provide a convenient public service. In 1791 the Torpoint Ferry was established, and provided a safer and faster crossing than the old Cremyll Ferry, which declined in importance.

Although the general growth in wheeled traffic took place in the rest of England from the mid-fifteenth century, it was late reaching the Southwest because of the impassable packhorse roads. By the early sixteenth-century there was a weekly post to London, and

stagecoaches were running from Plymouth to Exeter and London and to Falmouth in the seventeenth-century; in 1658 a post-house was established in Plymouth as part of the regular public mail services which began in 1630. As a result of the improvements to the roads and bridges, brought about by the introduction of turnpike systems, many regular stage-coaches left Plymouth for London. The draining of the marshes between Plymouth and Stonehouse and the construction of the new Union Road linking with Stonehouse Bridge made it possible to extend the stagecoach services to Devonport. The period 1770 - 1830 was one in which a tremendous improvement took place in the communications and transport not only between the Three Towns and distant destinations, but also in the immediate vicinity, with the towns becoming centres for the population of surrounding villages. The improvements particularly enabled communication to take place more easily between the individual towns, and reference to Fig. 1 and the Maps will show at a glance that it was in the early nineteenth-century that the signs of a developing conurbation emerged. In the late nineteenth-century cheap and easy links were formed by the tramway services between the towns. Meantime, a network of local railway stations had also emerged. The railway had reached Plymouth in 1848, being part of the South Devon Railway via Totnes and Newton Abbot to London; in 1856 a railway was opened between Plymouth and Tavistock, which connected with the Southern Region route around the north of Dartmoor via Okehampton.

From this brief indication of the transport and communication history of the Three Towns both locally and nationally, it seems possible to draw a few general conclusions which might affect library development. Although land communications were difficult before about 1800 in particular, the excellent sea communications both coastwise and overseas would have made it unlikely that the Three Towns were not aware of library developments elsewhere, although distance from the main book centres such as London and the university towns might have made it difficult to compete - that is, if the local population had the will to do so. At the local level it would have been difficult at first to establish any library or society which was dependent upon the unified support of the Three Towns because of the poor roads between them, with the possible exception of the wealthier element of the population which could afford horse transport. Throughout the late eighteenth and the nineteenth-centuries improvements were made in both roads and

transport which promoted the circulation of the population, and made it theoretically easier to attract support for a unified society or library for the Three Towns instead of separate provision in each; this, however, might in practice be partly offset by the growth in population which could make one large organisation unwieldy, or there could be political rivalries which might militate against unity. The surrounding towns and villages looked increasingly to the Three Towns as their regional centre, and provided an additional potential reservoir of library members as the new cheap public transport systems by road, rail and ferry linked them together.

It has been convenient to explore in the above section some of the general geographical considerations which have affected the Three Towns collectively rather than individually, but the next sections will outline the general history and character of the individual towns before returning to the consideration of some of the more obvious factors which could have influenced the growth of libraries within them.

2.2 THE HISTORY AND GENERAL CHARACTER OF PLYMOUTH.

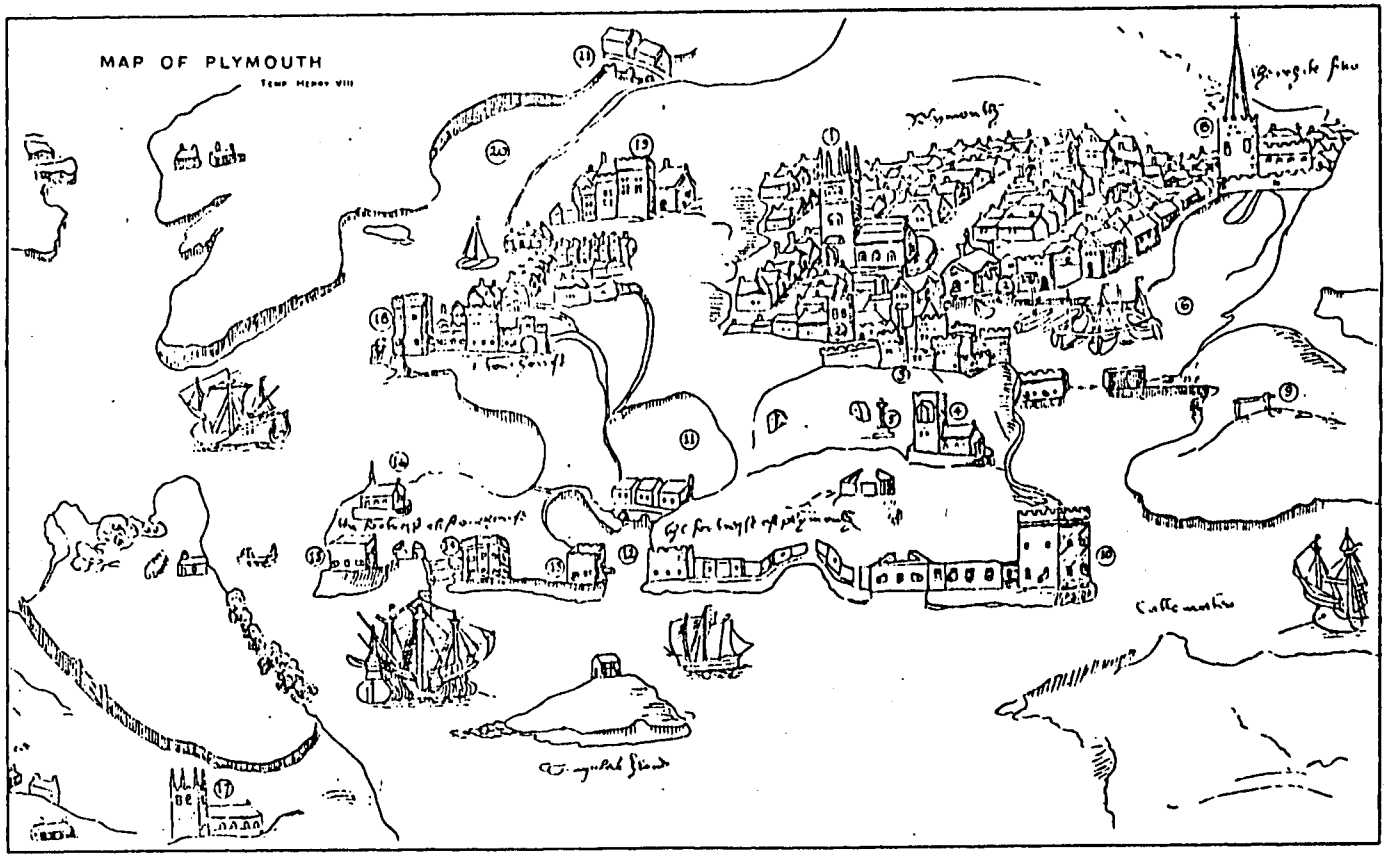
The oldest of the Three Towns is Plymouth, which had developed from the Domesday manor of Sutton long before any urban settlement had emerged at Devonport or Stonehouse. The manor of Sutton was one of the royal manors, although it was, ironically, the poorest in the district; in the early twelfth-century King Henry I gave it to the Valletort family, which remained in possession, or part possession of it, until 1439. The Valletorts were patrons of the Augustinian Priory which had been established at nearby Plympton in 1121, and they gave the priors several privileges in Sutton; this led to the division of the manor into Sutton Vautort (Valletort), which was the oldest part of the settlement on the north and west side, and Sutton Prior, between the old settlement and Sutton Pool. The main development took place in Sutton Prior, although the divided settlement was still known collectively as Sutton. First, it grew into a fishing village, or, as Leland desribed it, "a mene thing as an Inhabitation for fischars" (4), almost certainly supplying the Priory which held the fishing rights in the Tamar and Lynher rivers, and a fish market was established (5). An important national event in the twelfth-century was the acquisition of French provinces through Henry II, and the development of a flourishing wine trade between England and France. The advantages of Plymouth Sound as a port of refuge for the wine ships gradually became known, and the first reference to the name "Plymouth" ("Plimmue") appeared in 1231, when it denoted the Sound and the settlements on its shores, i.e. the port of Plymouth (6). The settlement at Sutton was stimulated by the visits of the wine fleet and also by its connections with the older port and town of Plympton which was then at the peak of its trade in exporting tin from Dartmoor. The commercial growth of Sutton appears to have been rapid in the late thirteenth-century. In 1254 the inhabitants of Sutton Prior were given a weekly market and an annual trade fair (7), and in 1281 the settlement was large enough to be called a "village" (8). In 1298 it returned its first Member of Parliament (9). The scope of trade at Sutton rapidly increased after coastal settlements had become more secure through the efforts of Edward I to suppress piracy. In 1280 the Cistercian Abbey at nearby Buckland was founded, encouraging fishing and pastoralism, leading to a trade in hides between the port of Plymouth and Flanders (10). Ships from the port of Plymouth took an active part in the wine trade from at least 1303 (11) and began to

supply Cornish merchants who had previously been supplied by Exeter (12). Much of the trade of the port of Plymouth was by this time being carried on at Sutton Pool, for Plympton's supremacy was waining with the decline of the tin trade and the silting up of the Plym estuary. By about 1400 not only was Sutton recognised as the main settlement at the port of Plymouth, (even in 1297 an order referred to "Plymouth with the port of Sutton" (13)), but it had almost become synonymous with it, and was occasionally referred to as "the town of Plymouth" (14). In the early fifteenth-century ships from the town were taking part in the carrying trade with Flanders, Zealand, Iberia, France, etc., and had developed a coastwise trade through the dispersal of imported goods (15).

The expansion of medieval Sutton was not entirely due to this commercial success, for it gradually became involved in military matters through the strategic importance of the port of Plymouth, which began to be recognised at least as early as 1295 (16). The port featured prominently in the expeditions to the French Provinces to quell the rebellions there, for one of its main advantages as an embarkation port was the shorter voyage. Men and horses were ordered to muster at the port, and the inhabitants of Sutton began to be involved in the problems of providing provisions and accommodation for the fleets and troops. The immediate hinterland could not provide adequate provisions, so food was brought from neighbouring counties, almost certainly by the coastwise trade. The Hundred Years' War, which began in 1336 when Edward III laid claim to the throne of France, only served to expand the military function of the port and further stimulated Sutton, where the settlement had grown sufficiently to require some form of government. From 1310 a Praepositus was elected (17), an officer who was the representative of the Prior of Plympton and responsible to him for the law and order of the town; the Praepositus was often mistakenly addressed as "Mayor" in extant writs and orders (18), a natural enough mistake for the settlement had become virtually selfsufficient, with its own mills, weavers, tanners, shipbuilding and repairing, etc., and had effectively achieved considerable independence from the Prior of Plympton. In 1439 the town was incorporated by an Act of Parliament, to become the Borough of Plymouth. A charter of 1463 confirmed the grant, referring not only to the "Mayor and Commonalty" but also to a merchant guild in the borough (which would regulate crafts and trades). Very few other guilds are known to have existed in Plymouth (19);

one was the guild of "Our Lady and Saint George", to which every freeman of Plymouth had to belong, and the other was a religious guild, "Guild of Corpus Christi" (20). The only craft guilds recorded are the Tailors' Guild and Cordwainers' Guild; records do not mention such guilds as a Shipmans' Guild for sailors or St. Peter's Guild for fishermen, which is surprising in view of the strength of the maritime activities of Plymouth. Perhaps the late incorporation might explain the dearth of guilds, which in some other places were prominent and even were instrumental in the establishment of early libraries, as in the case of the Guild of Kalendars at Bristol.

The growth of Plymouth as a military and commercial port had made it an obvious target for French attacks, which took place periodically in the fourteenth-century. Town walls began to be erected, although it was left to the early sixteenth-century to erect more effective walls and a castle quadrate. Fig. 5 shows Plymouth *tempus* Henry VIII, a compact settlement with the market near the church of St. Andrew's, the inner harbour as the landing place, and the pier overlooked by the castle. The sketch also shows locations for the White Friars or Carmelites, and it should be noticed that the Franciscans and Dominicans had also taken up residence in the town although no records survive from these establishments; the friars probably found a need for their services to the sick as well as audiences for their teaching among the soldiers and seamen who swelled the population. The fifteenth-century generally was not a happy one, for the town shared in the widespread difficulty of recovery after the Black Death, and from the mid-century the peace treaty with France left Plymouth without the military incentive which had sustained it and trading had inevitably dropped significantly. However, the next century more than made up the temporary decline, for it proved a turning point in the town's history, making Plymouth an ocean port with the advent of the Age of Discovery. By the late sixteenth-century it was acknowledged to be the foremost port in England, a position which was particularly due to its advantageous position as the most westerly major port, its orientation to the New World, and the influence of Plymouth seamen in the formulation of national naval policies. It became the port from which expeditions of exploration were led by such men as Martin Cockrem, William Hawkins, Humphrey Gilbert, Francis Drake and Walter Raleigh; they sailed for South America, the Pacific Ocean, West Indies, Newfoundland,



Map of Plymouth, *temp.* Henry VIII.

KEY
1.—St. Andrew's Church.
2.—Franciscan Friary (and, possibly, "Black Friars.").
3.—Old Plymouth Castle.
4.—St. Katharine's Chapel.
5.—Hoe Cross.
6.—Sutton Pool.
7.—A Market Cross (?).
8.—Carmelite Friary.
9.—Gibbet.
10.—Blockhouse, Lambhay Point.
11.—Sourcpole.
12.—Millbay.
13, 14, 15.—"Henry VIII. Towers" at Eastern King, Winter Villa, and Devil's Point.
16.—St. Lawrence Chapel.
17.—Maker Church.
18.—Old Stonehouse Manor House.
19.—The Stonehouse "Abbey."
20.—Stonehouse Creek.
21.—Mill Bridge.

Fig. 5 Plymouth *tempus* Henry VIII.

(From BRACKEN's History of Plymouth, 1931)

Virginia, etc. The strategic position of Plymouth as a port in the hostilities with Spain restored the military function as well as the commercial function which soared as goods began to flow in from the new colonies overseas. The town began to make many civic improvements, particularly to the harbour of Sutton Pool where new quays were built. A regular water supply was brought to the town by a leat from the river Meavy, thereby improving not only the watersupply to the townsfolk, who previously had to rely on wells, but also for shipping. New corn mills were built to cope with demand, and land reclamation began at the upper part of Millbay, shown in Fig. 5 as number 11, Sourepole. The local employment was almost entirely connected with shipping, either as merchants, traders, shipbuilders and repairers, or seamen. The merchants and traders began to acquire considerable wealth. The emphasis on trade and commerce also seems to have brought with it an awareness, to some extent, of the need for literacy, for a Corporation Grammar School was established in 1561 by public subscription.

Plymouth suffered mixed fortunes in the early decades of the seventeenth-century. Commercial prosperity continued despite the system of monopolies which at times affected the Plymouth merchants adversely. However, the Plymouth Company which had been formed in 1606 received a new charter in 1620 which enabled it to encourage settlement in New England, and there followed many voyages to the east coast of America for trade and fishing. The town's heavy involvement with commercial and military maritime affairs could at times be a disadvantage, for it resulted in frequent visitations of infectious diseases commonly referred to as the "plague". One particularly bad year was 1626-7 when 2,000 people are reported to have died (21). The Civil War period was a time of hardship for Plymouth, which declared for Parliament at the outset and was the only Parliamentary borough in the Southwest not to pass into Royalist hands at some stage during the war. This was due to its strategic position by land and the ability to obtain stores and assistance by sea, although great hardship was experienced. Map 1 shows the area of the Three Towns at this time. Charles II caused a new strong fortress to be built on the Hoe, ostensibly for the defence of the realm, but equally as a reminder to the townsfolk of their proper allegiance. Trade was quickly resumed, aided by the Navigation Acts of 1651 and 1660 which strengthened

relations with the plantations, the Levant, the Mediterranean and Europe, relieving the congestion of the port of London, and causing the further development of west-coast ports such as Plymouth, Bristol and Liverpool (22). The coastwise trade was complementary to this foreign trade, and towards the end of the seventeenth-century Plymouth's outward shipments were mostly imported goods to the ports of Devon and Cornwall and to London. Inward cargoes via the coasting trade provided the food, raw materials, coal, and other necessities to support the growing population (23). Two quotations will serve to illustrate the character of Plymouth shortly before 1690 when the dockyard was commenced at the Hamoaze which was to result in the birth of Devonport and the development of Stonehouse, the other two towns of the trio. The first quotation is from a play, *Newes from Plymouth* by Sir William Davenant, published in 1672 and caricaturing the reputation of Plymouth in a dialogue between two seamen:

> "This town is dearer than Jerusalem after a year's seige,
> They would make us pay for daylight if they knew how to
> measure the sunbeams by the yard,
> Nay, sell the very aire, too, if they could
> serve it out in fine china bottels.
> If you but walk but three times in the High Street
> they will ask you for mony for wearing out the pebles." (24)

The second quotation is an eye-witness account of the town in 1669, as seen by the visiting Count Magalotti:

> "Plymouth ... is now so increased in buildings and population, that it may be reckoned among the best cities in England, having between 12 - 15,000 in habitants ..... Its extent is not very considerable. The buildings are antique ..., lofty and narrow with pointed roofs .... The life of the city is navigation. The inhabitants export lead and tin in greater quantities than any other article, and with these they go to the Canaries and to the Western Island. To Barbadoes, in the new world, and in every part of Europe they act as carriers, conveying merchandise from place to place, at an immense profit to themselves. Hence, ... the greater part of the men living at sea; hence also the town is exceedingly well supplied, all the necessaries of life being found there, and every ship exempt from duty, except wine, which ... is ... imported from foreign countries; and not only is there great plenty of meat, cloths and linen, but of many other articles that administer to luxury and to pleasure; and silversmiths, watchmakers, jewellers, and other artists of this description, are not wanting." (25)

When the Royal Dockyard was established in 1690 the town of Plymouth already had some centuries of municipal history and was both well-built and well established, with a deep involvement in both

commercial and military affairs. The new dockyard, however, inevitably attracted to itself much of the skilled labour from Plymouth, for the regular wages proved attractive to men who were used to living on undependable incomes from fishing and sailing. There was an initial jealousy between Plymouth and the upstart new town of "Plymouth Dock" (as early Devonport was known), for when the latter had become sufficiently established in the eighteenth-century, it became the military headquarters of the area, a role which had been transferred from Plymouth, leaving that town with her trade and commerce. Although the settlement at Dock had begun soon after the dockyard commenced, it grew very slowly until the late eighteenth-century when it began its population began to increase rapidly, overtaking that of Plymouth and surpassing it by some fifty percent in 1801. Dock, however, was concerned almost exclusively with the building and repair of naval ships, and although Plymouth had lost that side of her shipbuilding industry she retained the building and repairing of merchant ships. Any actual loss caused by the rise of Dock must have been largely compensated , because the highly specialised community at Dock relied upon the old town to provide a full range of commercial services for it. Plymouth was the commercial centre for Dock, and for Stonehouse also; their growing populations created a local demand for the goods which had previously been exported as surplus from the port, and required increasing imports of coal, salt, timber, from the coastwise trade with South Wales, Liverpool, Southampton, Bristol and London; for example, coal imports doubled between 1766 and 1798. The foreign trade continued but Plymouth had become second to Exeter in the Devon ports of the early eighteenth-century; the overseas trade of Plymouth was to a very large extent with North America for the colonial produce such as sugar, rice, rum and tobacco. Some new industries were established in the town, such as sugar refining, button making, china manufacturing (Cookworthy), woollen goods, and turpentine; and the indigenous industries expanded to meet the growing local demands for food and drink, and household goods of all kinds. The traditional industries which were subsidiaries to the shipping industry, such as sailmaking and ropemaking, continued, but some greater variety had been introduced into the general scope of industry in the town. Papermills were established by Huguenot settlers, who formed a significant part of the population at Stonehouse, but only one papermill remained in existence for any substantial period, and that was a brown paper mill at Millbay from 1710 to 1811. Banking was introduced

in Plymouth in 1773. An early local newspaper, *Plymouth weekly journal*, was published from 1718 to 1725, after which the town had to wait for nearly a century before a regular local paper was successfully launched. The people of Plymouth seem to have been somewhat philistine in their attitude to the arts and literature, being too preoccupied by the practical problems of trade and commerce in times of peace and war, or threats of war, particularly in the late eighteenth-century and the early years of the nineteenth-century, when:

> "The speculating part of the community had employed their capital in fitting out privateers, the merchant was occupied in his insurances against the enemy, ... All classes were more or less occupied in training for volunteers, who to a man were praying to meet Napoleon single-handed ..." (26)

Although the signs of intellectual life were not clearly marked in the community, there was an active social life, particularly stimulated by the frequent royal visits to the town. A sense of civic pride was also beginning to stir. The simple improvements such as providing adequate street lighting, paving and watchmen in the eighteenth-century led to grander schemes in the early nineteenth-century, with the erection of a new Guildhall in 1800, and a social complex of municipally owned theatre/hotel/ballroom which was designed by the architect John Foulston and opened in 1813. There is no doubt that the middle classes in Plymouth were very affluent at this time, for while wars had broken the overseas trade, fortunes could be made in prizes and higher prices. The working classes suffered the same kinds of grim distress which beset that section of the population generally in the country, with famine prices and starvation. The town also had a considerable population of destitute wives and orphans of the soldiers and sailors, who were not local residents but needed help. The middle-classes began to do much for the town, with the establishment of charity schools, a public dispensary, the building and improvement of the streets and market, the construction of embankments and new roads over the marshy areas, the foundation of the Plymouth Chamber of Commerce to re-establish the trade, and other practical measures. The overt evidence of cultural life began to appear, with the establishment of Plymouth Public Library in 1810 and the Plymouth Institution in 1812. Map 2 shows that the town had taken on a very different appearance from that shown on Map 1 and Fig. 5, and a glance at Maps 3 and 4 will indicate that the next one hundred years, approximately up to 1914, brought about more far-reaching changes and developments and a major population increase.

One of the early developments was the re-establishment of a successful trade with North America, the Mediterranean, and to Europe, which brought new life and expansion to Sutton Harbour. In the mid-century a new dimension was added, for Plymouth became an emigrant port and a thriving passenger trade commenced. This had been made possible by the railway, which reached Plymouth in 1848. New docks were built at Millbay by the railway companies to relieve the pressure on Sutton Harbour, and a railway terminus was built at Millbay for the passenger liner traffic. The emigrants, particularly the Irish, flocked to the town en route for Australia, Canada, South Africa etc. In 1847 they numbered about 1,200, in 1848 over 8,000, and in 1849 over 15,000. By 1836 there had been consular offices at Plymouth for about sixteen countries, and this had almost doubled by 1850. The new Great Western Docks at Millbay continued to handle the growing passenger liner traffic as Plymouth became a regular passenger port; it also took the overflow of trade with overseas countries in particular. The introduction of steamships, however, resulted in a comparative decrease in trade at Plymouth from the 1860s because of the greater advantage of using ports further east, although passenger traffic still flourished. Local industry expanded as the population increased, and more light industries were established, including a match factory, biscuit-making, starch and soap making, bonemeal and chemicals. The traditional industries related to sailing ships, such as rope and sailmaking, naturally declined.

It is appropriate at this point to look at the occupations of the town as shown by the Census of 1861 and summarised in Table 2.

Table 2. Plymouth. Occupations in 1861

		Men	Women
Total number of persons over 20 years of age		16,198	20,215
Class I.	Professional	3,548	333
Class II.	Domestic	413	14,247
Class III.	Commercial	2,647	135
Class IV.	Agricultural	975	133
Class V.	Industrial	6,916	4,093
Class VI	Indefinite and non-productive	1,699	1,274

The occupations of the women are comparatively simple; the largest group, Class II, included over 11,000 who were not in paid employment, but who evidently were engaged in normal household duties appropriate to their respective ranks in life and size of families - they were "ladies, widows, children and relatives", etc. About 3,165 were employed in domestic service of some kind. Over 604 were "gentlewomen and annuitants". The majority of the Industrial Class women were occupied in supplying the dress and fashion demands of the large group of ladies who did not have to earn wages for their living; nearly 1,700 alone were engaged in tailoring and dressmaking, and there were many associated trades such as glove-making, milliners, etc. The professional class consisted of teachers, variously described as governesses, mistresses, teacher of music, etc.

The male population was occupied in a wide variety of occupations. The most numerous class was the Industrial Class, within which the most numerous occupations were, in descending order: 670 masons, 648 shoemakers, 546 carpenters and joiners, 294 shipbuilders and shipwrights, 274 outfitters, 261 plumbers, painters and glaziers, and 210 blacksmiths. These are evidently connected with the merchant shipping industry, and the provision of building trade services to the expanding population and the establishment of new suburbs. The Professional Class is the next in order of size, and reveals mainly the Armed Services, with over 1,200 royal navy officers and seamen, 1,171 army officers and soldiers, and 293 dockyard artificers. The third significant class, the Commercial Class, revealed the merchant navy equivalent, with 1,195 merchant seamen, followed at some distance by the next numerous group of over 200 errand boys, 168 car-men and carters, 160 commercial clerks, and 46 merchants. Hidden within the broadly based classes are particular groups which will be brought to light in section 2.5, but it is sufficient to notice at this point that the most numerous groups contain no surprises, being a reflection of the general trade and commerce which has been outlined.

The considerable size of the building trade shown by the occupation breakdown was the direct result of the rapid expansion of population which was taking place. The figures shown in Table 1 demonstrate that the population of Plymouth doubled between 1801 and

1831, had doubled again by 1861, and almost doubled yet again by 1911. Inevitably the town expanded, with new suburbs being built particularly on the north and east sides of the town, such as Mutley, Mannamead, Laira, and Compton. The more prosperous families who were previously living on the outskirts of the old town became submerged in the new outgrowths, and many of them moved yet further out, beyond the old town and into the surrounding countryside. A noticeable feature of the expansion of urban accommodation around the town was that it began as ribbon development, not around previous small rural nuclei which might have encouraged local centres to be established for shopping and services etc. Instead, the suburb-dwellers had easy communication with the old town and continued to use it, so that everything of commercial importance was virtually concentrated in the centre of the town. This, as will be seen later, affected library growth, particularly the branch libraries network. The working class people who could not afford new accommodation largely remained in the old town, where, because the main numerical expansion was in the lower classes, crowding led to overcrowding, and overcrowding in areas with poor water supplies and defective sanitation systems led to squalor and disease. These problems were the more difficult to resolve in that over-riding authority did not exist in any one local body.

The original charter of 1439 had been confirmed many times and had extended the original privilege of the town, which was supposed to be governed by the Mayor, 12 Aldermen, and 24 Councillors. It appears that the administration of the town was in practice curiously and mainly in the hands of the Court of Quarter Sessions (27). The power of the magistrates was challenged by a series of law suits, which resulted in many municipal reforms being achieved in Plymouth before the *Municipal Corporation Act 1835*, although the latter year marked a change in the system towards government by committees. The first committees appointed were respectively Watch, Land, Finance, Market, Hoe, and Water committees, but others were added through the century. Other bodies were also involved in civic affairs, although they often contained the mayor, aldermen and councillors under different titles, such as the Commissioners for Lighting, Paving and Watching, 1770 - 1856, superceded by the Local Board of Health in 1856; the Guardians of the Poor, 1708 - 1835, were followed by the Poor Law Union, whose powers did not pass to the municipal authority until 1930; the powers of the School Board, set up in

1870, were not acquired by the Borough Council until 1903. In 1888 the Borough became a County Borough, and in 1896 and 1898 the boundaries were extended to include the dormitory suburbs of Compton Gifford, Pennycross, Egg Buckland and Laira Green.

The expanding population of the nineteenth-century resulted in the proliferation of religious and social institutions in Plymouth. A number of new parishes were created in 1846 and thereafter, from the old parishes of St. Andrew's and Charles (the latter having been established in the mid seventeenth-century). Many nonconformist churches and chapels were also established. The religious bodies were responsible for the establishment of many voluntary schools, both day schools and Sunday schools, which together with the other endowed and subscription schools and organisations such as the Mechanics' Institute (1825), plus numerous private schools, gradually enabled the working class population of Plymouth to achieve some degree of literacy before the introduction of compulsory free elementary education for all at the end of the century. This will be explored more deeply later in this chapter.

Considerable improvements were made in Plymouth in the last two decades of the nineteenth-century and the years up to 1914, largely due to a rising rateable value and increases in rates which provided money for municipal action. The rateable value in 1871 was £166,332; by 1891 it was nearly double, £289,871; by 1901 it was approaching the region of £500,000, and within a few years had passed that figure. Ellis (28) summarised the improvements which had taken place by 1907: new water supply from Burrator Reservoir; new sewage disposal system; an isolation hospital; slum clearance; reduction of the deathrate from 22.4 per 1,000 in 1891 to less than 15 in 1907; street widening of the main roads; the establishment of several parks; an electricity station (1899) and electrification of tramways; standardisation of the local railway guage, and the expansion of the network of local branches and stations; and the establishment of the Plymouth Technical Schools. To this list Ellis might have added the establishment and successful development of a rate-supported public library, but perhaps he was not one of the enthusiastic supporters of that institution which had been opened in 1876; or perhaps his omission was a tactful

one, because not long before Ellis gave his paper there had been a row in the Borough Council over whether it should accept an offer from Andrew Carnegie to pay for the erection of a new building for the Central Library, which was still crammed into its "temporary" accommodation of 1876 in the old Guildhall; although the Council did accept the offer, it was evidently a sore point with many of the councillors for quite a while afterwards.

Even in the discussion about local government reorganisation in the 1880s there had been a move to cause the amalgamation of the "Three Towns" of Plymouth, Devonport and Stonehouse, for by that time they had become one large conurbation. Devonport managed to retain its freedom on that occasion, but gradually the economic and social logic of an amalgamation triumphed over the civic pride of the young borough. In November 1914 the Three Towns amalgamated, under the name of the oldest and largest of them, the County Borough of Plymouth.

2.3 THE HISTORY AND GENERAL CHARACTER OF DEVONPORT.

The history of Devonport is virtually synonymous with the history of Devonport Dockyard, which was founded in the late seventeenth-century by William III. There was comparatively little of importance on the site before that time. Although there is an early tradition, based upon one doubtful reference (29), that there was a place called Tamarweorth on the Tamar estuary, the earliest reliable reference to local settlement is from the Domesday record, which shows that the manor of Stoches (modern Stoke) was held by the Albemarle family. This family gave its name to the parish of Stoke Damerel, in which Devonport was later established. The manor passed through various ownerships, eventually coming to the Wise family which built a new manor house on the site overlooking the Hamoaze, now called Mount Wise. The Hamoaze had a reputation as a good anchorage long before it was decided to build the Dockyard there. Carew (30) called it "... a safe and commodious Road for shipping ..." where vessels which were eastward bound could wait for a favourable wind, while westbound ships waited in the Cattewater. In 1667 the manor was purchased by Sir William Morice, Secretary of State to Charles II, and shortly afterwards came to royal attention as a possible location for a new dockyard, for the wars with the Dutch and the French had made dockyard expansion necessary. The Hamoaze was preferred to the Cattewater where shipbuilding and repairing had been carried out previously for the navy, for it offered much more space for expansion, and the first Master Shipwright was appointed in 1690 to initiate the new yard.

At the time of the foundation of the Dockyard the parish of Stoke Damerel in which it was situated only contained a few scattered houses, the manorhouse at Mount Wise, and the parish church - perhaps a population of about two hundred people. The manor passed from the Wise family in 1725 to the St. Aubyn family, and as the population of Dock grew it was the St. Aubyn family, usually the Lord of the Manor, who provided the automatic patron for any social or civic event or development; the St. Aubyn family kept a close control over building development on its land, by leasing sites and retaining the freeeholds until well into the nineteenth-century.

The early dockyard was small, originally little more than

five acres in area. The first dry dock was completed in 1693, and the dockyard soon became a hive of activity. Less than one decade after its commencement, Celia Fiennes described it as follows:

> "The dockyards are about two miles from the town (Plymouth ... it is one of the best in England. A great many good ships buit there, ... There is a great deal of buildings on the Dock, a very good house for the masters, and several lesser ones, and house for their cordage and making ropes and all sorts of things required for refitting ships. It looks like a little town. The buildings are so many, and all of marble with fine slate on the roofs ..." (31)

At first the dockyard was referred to as "Dock in Hamoaze", then "Plymouth Dock", and then simply "Dock". The facilities and area expanded rapidly. By 1725 the Gun Wharf had been built, and the yard was described in 1725 as:

> "... as complete an arsenal or yard for building and fitting men-of-war as any the Government are masters of, and perhaps much more convenient than some of them, though not so large." (32)

The headquarters of the military government of the area was transferred at that time from Plymouth to Devonport, eventually in a fine newly built "Government House" at Mount Wise. In 1727 a second dock was built in the north of the yard, and in about 1728 a further fifty acres were added; by 1750 there were five docks constructed for shipbuilding and in 1762 Union (or North) Dock was built, followed in 1789 by New Union (New North) Dock. In 1768 the dockyard was extended northwards to North Corner.

Such rapid development could not take place without adequate supplies of labour, and Dock attracted many workers from the skilled labour of Plymouth, tempted by the regular wages. At first the actual settlement of dockyard workers at Dock was slow, for there were problems of water supply, of transport, and the lack of general commercial services, which continued to be provided at Plymouth. Gradually, however, a civilian settlement sprang up, and was said to have over three thousand people in 1733 (33). It was at first confined to the area between the dockyard itself and the military barracks which were built inside the town walls in the mid-eighteenth-century (Map 2). At first the inhabitants of Dock used the market at Saltash instead of at Plymouth because they found it was cheaper, and the road between Plymouth and Dock was frequently impassable. The opening of the Stonehouse Bridge in 1773 improved communication and transport between the two towns and made Stonehouse a convenient residential area for dockyard workers.

Although Dock relied mainly on Plymouth for its commercial services, it began to acquire some of its own, with a bank in 1788 and a post-office in 1793. An Act of 1781 gave Dock its Commissioners "for better maintaining and regulating the poor and for paving, cleansing and watching the streets." The problems of water-supply were alleviated in 1795 by cutting a leat to bring water from Dartmoor, but inefficient drainage arrangements were to be a serious problem for years. It seems that it was in the last two decades of the eighteenth-century that the population of Dock rose in dramatic leaps so that it had surpassed the mother town of Plymouth by 1801. The earliest directory for Dock, in 1783, shows that the civilian population included some professional men and the elements of a retail trade; it records: 5 attorneys, 6 surgeons, 4 chemists and druggists, 1 apothecary, 2 merchants, 6 grocers, 6 drapers, 4 ironmongers, 1 hatmaker, 1 ropemaker, 1 upholsterer, 1 carrier and 1 silversmith (34). Fifteen years later, another directory records 9 members of the legal profession, 12 members of the medical profession, 7 clergy, 17 gentlemen, and 650 traders providing every service necessary to feed, clothe and furnish the population. Among the traders were listed 8 schoolmasters, 5 stationers, and 1 bookseller who was also a dealer in hardware (35). The entries in the directories might not be comprehensive, but they are certainly indicative of the growth in population and the essential services to maintain it.

The Napoleonic Wars brought much prosperity to the Dockyard and the adjoining settlement. The civilian population could no longer be accommodated in the narrow area between the Dockyard and the various barracks along the town walls, and suburbs began to be established. The Government bought the estates of Morice Town, Ford and Swilly, and it was on the first of these, Morice Town, that the initial overspill took place. The area lay immediately north of the town walls (Map 2); in 1812 it consisted of three principal streets and other buildings, the whole of which had been erected within the previous twenty years. The village of Stoke was a "large, airy and pleasing village where many families of respectability have their residence" (36). Unlike Plymouth, the Devonport suburbs formed definite local communities and had nuclei of shops and services of their own. The community of Dock had begun to acquire a community spirit and sense of unity, and felt the need for independence from Plymouth. In 1824 Dock was officially renamed

Devonport, and in the 1820s it acquired many of the trappings of an official borough although it was not incorporated until 1837. The Town Hall, designed by John Foulston and opened in 1822, made a splendid location for meetings on matters of public interest, and it was here that the Mechanics' Institute was established in 1825, the Public Library meetings were held from 1824 to 1827, among many other events. In 1832 Devonport and Stonehouse were combined as a parliamentary borough, and after that date official statistics often refer to that unit, making it difficult to distinguish the components relating to the individual areas of Devonport and Stonehouse. In 1837 the Borough was incorporated, and a Mayor and Borough Council were elected, although the Commissioners still retained some of their powers such as the control of streets and sewers, providing difficulties which were not removed until the adoption of the *Local government act 1866*. The first Mayor of the Borough was the diplomatic election of Mr. Edward St. Aubyn, a younger son of the Lord of the Manor; cordial relationships with the Manor authorities continued to be maintained, and many events and organisations enjoyed the patronage of the St. Aubyn family.

The new town was busily occupied in the first half of the nineteenth-century by a continual sequence of improvements and expansions of all kinds. Many churches and chapels were built, and many of them had Sunday schools or day schools attached. New parishes were created by the Church of England, and the most numerous nonconformist chapels were Methodist with particular emphasis on Wesleyan Methodism as the result of several visits by John Wesley and George Whitefield. The first Sunday school in Dock was opened in 1806, and the first public school in 1809; a special school was established by subscription in 1831 for the children of servicemen who formed a numerous section of the child population. A Public Dispensary was built in 1815. The early social improvements were also accompanied by a short-lived cultural innovation in the form of Dock Literary and Philosophical Society, which was established in 1808, four years before Plymouth established a similar organisation, but which was apparently disbanded by the general agreement of its members in about 1821. In 1808 Dock acquired the first of its own newspapers, *Plymouth & Dock telegraph*.

It was inevitable that the fortunes of most of the inhabitants of Devonport would follow the fortunes of its major, virtually only,

industry. In the years of peace following the Napoleonic War and the American War there was a decline in the prosperity of the Dockyard, and many people left the town. In 1829 there were about 2,350 dockyard workers, plus 400 convicts; this was only about half the number of men employed during wartime, but the number decreased further to about 1,800 dockyard workers in 1842, by which time convict labour had been phased out also. Prosperity began to return around the middle of the century, from which time the Dockyard was engaged in building steamships and armour-plated warships as the result of the new technologies which had beec discovered. In 1844 Keyham Steam Yard was begun, and by 1848 the number of dockyard employees had risen to about 3,000, of whom nearly one third were shipwrights. The new technologies required a different approach to education and training, and from 1844 there was a Dockyard School, which was primarily engaged in the training of shipwrights, and engineers until the Keyham Training School for Engineers was established in 1881. The general prosperity of the Dockyard was maintained for the rest of the period up to 1914, due to the need to protect the far-flung British Empire and other naval and military activities in which the country was engaged.

The opening of the Keyham Steam Yard in 1853 and the advent of the railway in 1848 led to a considerable increase in the population of Devonport and the surrounding district. The population had fluctuated around 33,000 since the 1821 Census, but between 1841 and 1861 it increased by about 50% to reach 50,000, when it stabilised for nearly thirty years. The ancient village of Stoke grew into a small urban area of a completely residential nature. Morice Town grew because of the proximity of the new yard and the concentration of the commercial water-borne traffic on its short river frontage, which was covered with coal and timber supplies, with wharves, warehouses, limekilns, etc. The previously scattered settlement along the road between Morice Town and Stoke became a continuous settlement uniting the two in the mid nineteenth-century. In 1856 a new suburban district was formed at Ford. In the 1860s there was a slackening off in the population and housing expansion because of a temporary reduction in the Dockyard, but from 1880 there was a slow growth in the population from 48,000 to about 55,000 in 1891, and over 70,000 in 1901 when wars and rumours of wars brought more business to the Dockyard.

The overwhelming importance of the Dockyard and the naval and military establishments in Devonport is reflected very clearly in the occupation statistics from the 1861 Census, which are shown in the following table.

Table 3. Devonport. Occupations in 1861.

		Men	Women
Over 20 years of age		15,897	14,464
Class I.	Professional	8,824	189
Class II.	Domestic	281	10,377
Class III.	Commercial	962	67
Class IV.	Agricultural	202	89
Class V.	Industrial	4,698	3,086
Class VI.	Indefinite and non-productive	930	656

The largest class of men was the Professional Class, within which there were 3,610 seamen (R.N.), 1,938 soldiers, 653 royal marines, and 1,180 dockyard artificers. The Industrial Class contained 933 shipbuilders/shipwrights, 720 labourers, 386 carpenters/joiners, 349 blacksmiths, 150 engine and machine makers, and 122 ironmongers. These two classes therefore consisted chiefly of servicemen and dockyard workers respectively. The Industrial Class also contained the people whose occupations were to feed and clothe the servicemen and local population, for example 538 boot/shoemakers, 184 clothes dealers, 145 bakers, 105 butchers, and 85 grocers - not forgetting the 133 publicans and beersellers. The occupations of the women follow a similar pattern to that shown in Plymouth, with over 8,500 not in employment, about 1,500 in domestic service, nearly 1,400 in the dressmaking trade, 500 in the footwear trade, and some 600 others in various aspects of the clothing industry such as bonnets, haberdashery, children's wear, gloves, hosiery, etc. Another 500 sold provisions. It can be seen, therefore, that most of the adult population of Devonport fall into large well-defined groups: the transient population of service personnel, the regular dockyard employees, the people who supplied the basic needs of the population in food, drink, clothes, etc., and a large group of women not in gainful employment.

The first half of the nineteenth-century had been the time

during which many kinds of service and organisation had to be established de nouveau, but in the latter half of the century the opportunity could be taken to improve upon the earlier provisions and to introduce more sophisticated services. The Royal Albert Hospital was opened in 1863. The old barracks and town walls were removed, and the new Raglan Barracks and Royal Naval Barracks were built. A new Workhouse was built. The opening of the Brunel Bridge in 1859 provided a rapid link with Cornwall and made it easier for some Dockyard workers to live there. Public services were improved - gas, water and sewerage, and eventually electricity. Board Schools were established in 1870, and a natural corollary was the adoption of the Acts and the opening of a rate-supported public library in 1882. In 1888 the Borough became a County Borough, and although the Commissioners were replaced by a Board of Guardians, the County Borough Council had increased powers which enabled it to make municipal improvements more easily. The boundaries were extended to take in St. Budeaux in 1898 and part of Pennycross in 1900. An ambitious scheme was put on foot to erect new municipal buildings which would be more in keeping with the large authority, which was now a great contrast from the Devonport which had erected the original Town Hall in 1822; the projected cost was about £120,000, and this was one of the reasons for some agitation for amalgamation with Plymouth. Although Devonport had achieved much during its seventy-seven years as a municipal authority, and no doubt could have remained a viable local government unit, the emergence of the conurbation in which the boundaries could not be distinguished had resulted in many problems for the community. One simple example was the existence of the rival tramway companies of Plymouth and Devonport and the consequent inconvenience to passengers who wished to cross the boundary of their respective lines. People in small areas enjoyed different standards of local government services; Plymouth, for example, provided school libraries in all Board schools, Devonport had none. The natural political reluctance of Devonport to give up its independence was over-ruled by the anticipated advantages of convenient standardisation and the theoretical economies of amalgamation. Plymouth was again the largest of the Three Towns, having overtaken Devonport by 1841, as well as the oldest and most widely based; in 1914 the boundaries of Plymouth were extended to enclose Devonport and Stonehouse, and the process of amalgamation and absorption had begun.

2.4 THE HISTORY AND GENERAL CHARACTER OF STONEHOUSE

Stonehouse is by far the smallest of the Three Towns, both in area and population. It lies on a double peninsula which was originally almost surrounded by two penetrating inlets, providing a good defensive site. The earliest reliable evidence of settlement at Stonehouse is once again the Domesday Survey, which records a very small manor of the same name, "Stanehus" and mentions only one inhabitant, a villein, although that does not mean that there was literally only one person there - it does, however, indicate an unpromising little manor, which had become known as East Stonehouse by the mid fourteenth-century to distinguish it from West Stonehouse on the opposite side of the Tamar crossing. West Stonehouse is traditionally believed to have been burnt by the Bretons in their frequent raids, but the name "East Stonehouse" continued to be used long after the twin had ceased to exist; the area is known today as Stonehouse, and that was the name popularly given to the third member of the "Three Towns", so it will be referred to in these pages as Stonehouse with no danger of confusion

Stonehouse passed through various ownerships with little change until the Durnford family came into possession of it in about 1368, when the hamlet began to grow and was even termed a village in 1462. At the end of the fifteenth-century the manor passed into the hands of the Edgecumbe family where it remained. A few manorial court entries of that time record over fifty names of inhabitants, mostly defaulters for offences such as allowing their houses to be out of repair; there was also a quay which it was the tenants' duties to repair (37). Water transport was the most convenient method of local transport for the inhabitants, for to the north lay marshes and sea inlets lay on either side of the peninsula. The expansion of the settlement might have been partly due to the use of the Cremyll Ferry crossing into Cornwall, which brought travellers through Stonehouse. The first important step towards improving land communications was taken in about 1525 when the Edgecumbe family was responsible for the erection of Millbridge together with its corn mills. Figure 5 shows some details from a map *tempus* Henry VIII including the manor house, and the origins of what later became High St. (1588) and Chapel St. (1588). The fortifications were erected as part of the general

defence of the Realm 1537-9. To the north of the manorial township lay a large ecclesiastical building of which little is known, although it is generally thought to have belonged to the Cistercians of Buckland, possibly as an outlet for their trade. This 'abbey' was demolished in the eighteenth-century when the Royal Naval Hospital was built. The map also shows a small Chapel of St. Lawrence, and by 1497 there was also a Chapel of St. George, generally under the mother church of St. Andrew's at Plymouth. By the Reformation, Stonehouse was a very small, unincorporated "township" under the Edgecumbes, but with no marked characteristics apart from agriculture and fishing. Fishing continued to be important, and in about 1595 a Stonehouse ship sailed with the Newfoundland fishing fleet. The settlement was empowered by Parliament to cut a leat for its water supply. Although Stonehouse had a good defensive site, it had not been used directly for military purposes; but it was not unaccustomed to military activity for soldiers were sometimes billeted there on occasions when there were not enough lodgings in Plymouth.

Pole states that Stonehouse was a "convenient bigge towne" in the early seventeenth-century (38), but this seems an exaggeration. The main growth had yet to come. The population was slightly increased in about 1681 when several French protestant refugees from the Rochelle district settled in Stonehouse; gradually the Huguenots integrated with the community and lost all distinction apart from surnames of French origin. It was the foundation of the Dockyard in 1690 that caused the next expansion of Stonehouse, for it lay on the route between Plymouth and Dock after the opening of the Stonehouse Bridge in 1773, and some of the dockyard workmen came to live there. In 1788 Stonehouse was described by a visitor, S. Shaw, as follows:

> "Stonehouse, a populous place ... surprised us with a very large display of spacious streets, intersecting at angles, very different from the place we had just left (Plymouth); as the inhabitants here are chiefly mechanics etc. belonging to the docks. The houses are slightly built, either of plaster, or slate stone, abundantly got hereabouts." (39)

Growth was particularly rapid after 1780, due to the establishment of the Royal Naval Hospital in 1762 and the Royal Marine Barracks in 1795. Fine new residences were built for the officers and government officials in Emma Place and Durnford Street, and although the older parts were still occupied by the working class mechanics it was the new buildings which gave the main character to the settlement, which was described

in 1830 as follows:

> "The streets in general are wide and commodious, and the houses are neat and genteel, forming the residences of the officers of the navy, army and gentlemen connected with the civil departments of government, as well as private individuals. ... Of the commercial interest of Stonehouse, little can be said, the town being more the residence of the independent gentry .... The vessels which are employed are principally in the timber and coal trades; the latter merely supplying the exigencies of the inhabitants!" (40)

The same source identifies the manufacturing industries of Stonehouse to consist only of iron and brass founders, varnish markers, and breweries. There were a few civilian professional men, viz. six legal practitioners, six medical men and two auctioneers. It was at this time, too, that the last major contributor to the expansion of Stonehouse was taking shape; that was the new Victualling Yard, which commenced in 1826 and was completed in 1835. It was one of the three main victualling depots for the Royal Navy, and through it passed goods and foodstuffs, equipment and stationery, and even libraries once the Admiralty established a policy in favour of libraries for seamen in 1838. Ships were supplied on being commissioned, were restocked when they called into the port during commission, and were required to account for and return appropriate stores when they were paid off at the end of a commission.

Stonehouse did not achieve an independent commercial and industrial life of its own, for it consisted essentially of government establishments and a civilian residential dormitory population. Even its Market had little business transacted in it because of the extensive cheap supplies which were available in Plymouth and Devonport. The settlement did, however, acquire a number of churches and chapels of many denominations, a public subscription school and Sunday schools were established, and in the mid-century it showed a community feeling by erecting a building which was at first called Stonehouse Town Hall but became known later as St. George's Hall. For a short while, there was a Mechanics' Institute at Stonehouse, but it soon ran into financial difficulties through lack of local support.

The position of Stonehouse, on a peninsula, made it increasingly difficult to accommodate the growing population in the nineteenth-century, for there was a simple lack of space on which to build. At

the beginning of the century the population was about 3,400; it had almost doubled by 1821, and in another ten years had almost trebled. The land available for expansion had been used up, and the increase in population could only be at the expense of living standards. The general squalor which overtook the working class population in old houses and tenements in the larger houses vacated by the middle classes resulted in an Enquiry under the provisions of the Public Health Act in 1853. It was discovered that the annual rate of mortality in Stonehouse was 29 per 1,000, well above the 23 per 1,000 rate which was set by Parliament as the level justifying enquiries. Typhus was ever present among the poor, and when cholera appeared in the country this district was one of the severest sufferers; in a recent epidemic 148 in 1,000 died, putting Stonehouse in the unenviable position of ninth worst in the country (although parts of Plymouth were no better). The Enquiry also found that the average population per house was 10.16, nearly double the average of all England, which was about 5.5 (41). Even by 1891, when the housing situation was generally much improved in Devonport and Plymouth, it remained bad at Stonehouse, where the average population per house was still over 10, and more than half of the population lived in one or two room tenements, with several cases of five or more people in single room tenements. The implications of these conditions with reference to forming the habit of reading and the process of self-education are obvious.

The Census 1861 statistics of occupations confirm in their detail the general character of the residents of Stonehouse, and are shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Stonehouse. Occupations in 1861.

		Men	Women
Total over 20 years of age		3,872	4,697
Class I.	Professional	2,118	73
Class II.	Domestic	120	3,390
Class III.	Commercial	282	15
Class IV.	Agricultural	37	9
Class V.	Industrial	1,026	968
Class VI.	Indefinite and non-productive	289	242

The Professional Class of men reveals 1,194 Royal Marines, 675 half-pay officers and pensioners, and 109 government officers, as might be expected from the presence of the Royal Marine Barracks and the Royal William Victualling Yard; there was also a scattering of civilian professions - 13 clergymen, 18 medical men, a few schoolmasters, etc. The Industrial Class predictably includes mainly shipwrights, carpenters, masons, plumbers, mercers, bootmakers, etc. - the dockyard workers and the services required to support any community.

The general pattern indicated by the population's occupations in 1861 continued until 1914. Although Stonehouse became an Urban District instead of a parish within Devon, and thereby acquired power, it was not an effective local government administration. It will be seen that the lack of rich commercial and industrial enterprises, plus the poor housing, did not provide a high rateable value, and it seems that the retention of freehold by the Lord of the Manor must have given problems when ordinary urban developments were required. The people of Stonehouse seem to have used Plymouth and Devonport for commercial services, for the centres of these two towns were easily reached by public transport or on foot. Politically, the Urban District Council must have found difficulty at times in deciding whether to take advantage of any potential benefits from Devonport, with which it was linked in a Parliamentary Borough, or Plymouth which was the larger, richer borough. In the case of the rate-supported public library, at least, it made enquiries, but did not come to any decision to act. The integration of the comparatively simple community with Plymouth and Devonport in 1914 was a natural move, in which it seems that Stonehouse was likely to reap the advantages and consequently raised no major protest at losing its independence.

2.5 THE THREE TOWNS AS A GENERAL ENVIRONMENT FOR LIBRARIES

In this section consideration will be given to some of the more obvious factors which might be expected to influence the history of libraries in the Three Towns, looking in more detail at some of the points which have already been touched upon briefly in the outlines of the history and general character of the individual towns.

2.5.1 Community history.

Although each of the Three Towns can trace its history back to 1086, the first one to achieve a sizeable community was Plymouth, which was incorporated in 1439 but already had clear commercial and military functions by that time. Potentially, Plymouth could reveal libraries from the late medieval period onwards, for it had religious, municipal and guild organisations which, in favourable conditions, have resulted in the establishment of libraries elsewhere. In the seventeenth-century Plymouth definitely had a comparatively large population which included rich merchants and traders, so that the wealth to acquire books was not lacking; and there was a commercial need for a certain degree of literacy. Trade communications are likely to have ensured a local awareness of the bookmarkets and libraries in existence elsewhere. In the eighteenth-century the middle-class people of Plymouth were becoming more leisured as well as richer, able to make their profits from peace and war alike. In theory, Plymouth could have contained libraries contemporary with and of the same kind as those in the rest of England, unless its inhabitants were discouraged by the distance of good book-markets, or were not especially interested in literature generally.

Devonport was not really established as a community until the second half of the eighteenth-century, and it would be reasonable to find in it examples of subscription libraries and later types, but probably not the varying types of endowed libraries, which were generally declining by 1750. Devonport was so dependent upon the Dockyard and had such a limited variety of occupations, that it would seem less likely to show the richness of libraries - - which is potential in Plymouth. Stonehouse seems even more limited in potential, being mainly an eighteenth-century development which took place partly as a dormitory area for Dockyard workmen and partly owing to the Government establishments of the Royal Naval

Hospital, the Royal Marine Barracks, and the Victualling Yard. The civilian population has always been small, but the earlier emphasis contained a middle-class social element which could have supported some form of subscription library. The expansion of the working class section of the population together with the increasingly poor living conditions might, however, have provided some incentive for the collective efforts commonly made elsewhere by working men to provide facilities for self-improvement, including libraries.

The general expectation from the general patterns of the community growth is that Plymouth should provide the longest and richest library history, that Devonport would provide a more limited range of libraries and a shorter history; and that the expectation from Stonehouse ought to be comparatively small and simple. However, the unexpected can occur as the result of individual initiative or special conditions.

2.5.2 Community size and occupational structure.

The sizes of the three towns have not remained constant in relation to each other. Table 1 has shown the actual population figures, but Fig. 6 shows the population of each of the towns as a percentage of the total Three Towns population from 1801 - 1911. This reveals that the general trend throughout the period was for Plymouth's population to increase; Devonport started in 1801 as the largest town, but from 1821 onwards suffered a decline until 1851, after which it tended to fluctuate slightly within the same range, viz. about 35 - 40%. Stonehouse shows an early slight rise to 1831, virtual stabilisation at just above 10% for the next sixty years, and a slight decline thereafter. Fig. 7 shows the percentage of male population in each of the towns 1801 - 1911, in which it can be seen that there was a steep increase in Devonport and Stonehouse between about 1851 - 1861, a less pronounced rise at the same time in Plymouth, and a general rise through the whole period for each town. The inverse is, of course, true of the female population. It is doubtful whether these variations in the proportions of the male and female population will have any detectable significance in the library developments, but perhaps it is a point to be noticed at this stage.

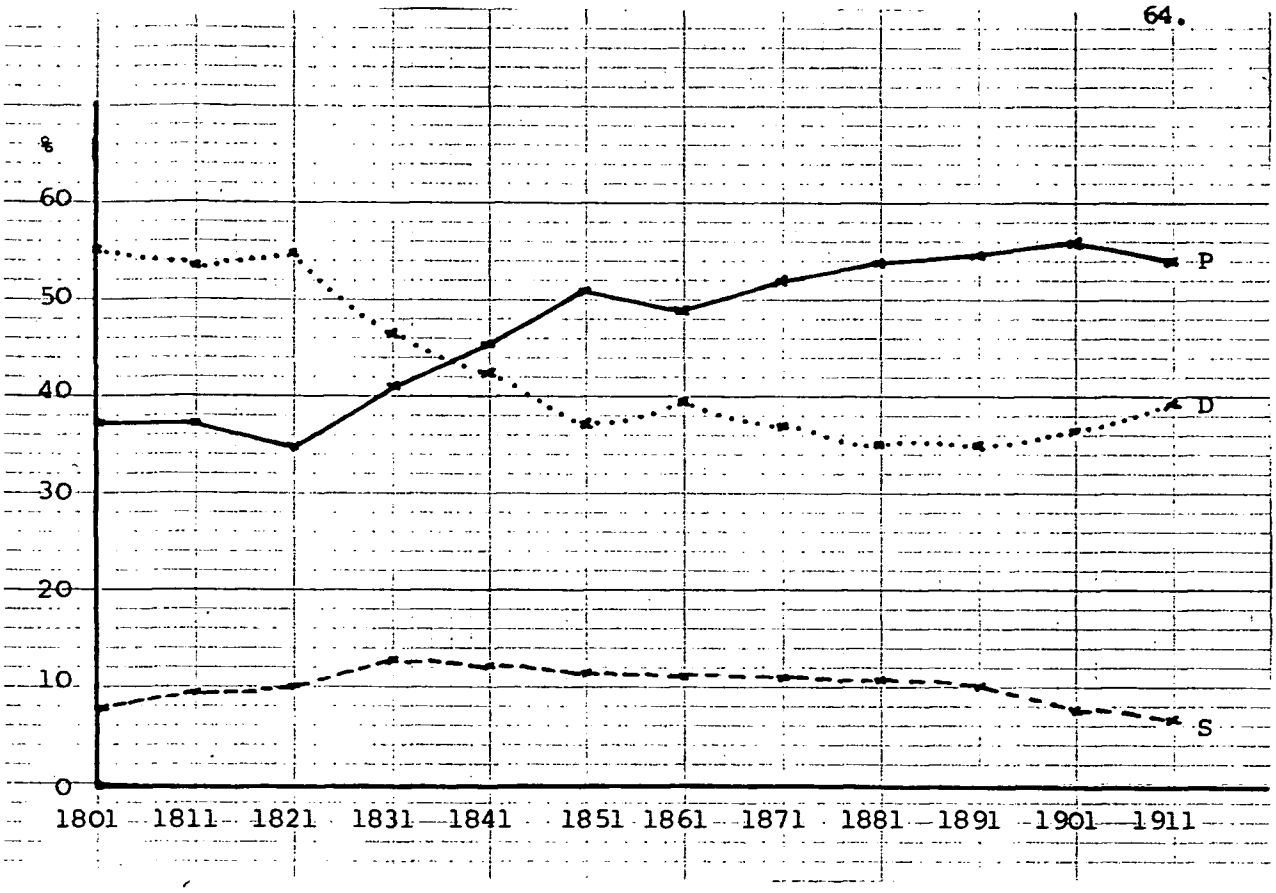


Fig. 6 The populations of Plymouth, Devonport and Stonehouse as percentages of the total Three Towns population 1801-1911.

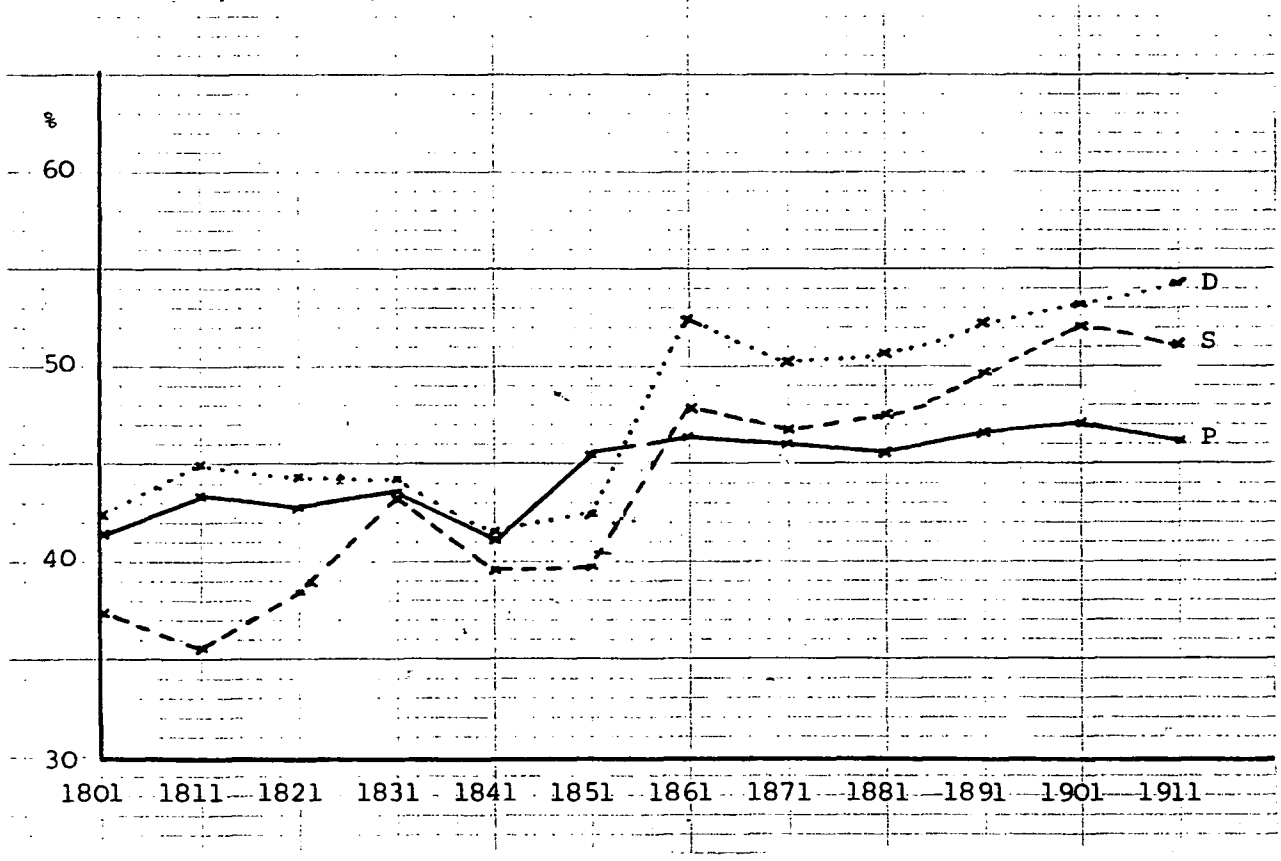


Fig. 7 The percentage of male population in each of the Three Towns, 1801-1911.

The structure of a community can be defined and interpreted in various ways, but the intention here is to examine more closely the relative importance of different groups as revealed by the occupation statistics of the 1861 Census, and to compare the individual towns. The statistics for 1861 have been chosen as the most appropriate ones for a number of reasons. This was the first Census in which a suitably detailed breakdown of occupations was published, the 1851 Census having been a less satisfactory, experimental set of headings, and the previous figures being too general for use. By 1861 the Three Towns had achieved what was to prove to be a stable relationship in their population, and each had acquired its main characteristics and functions, which continued to operate for the remainder of the period up to 1914 despite minor modifications brought about by changing technologies. In 1861 it might be expected that there might be a particular richness in the types and numbers of libraries, for there could be the lingering on of any old endowed libraries in Plymouth, subscription libraries in all of the Three Towns, and a variety of forms of working class libraries formed in these years prior to the 1870 *Education Act* which laid the foundation for free elementary education for all children. Yet the year 1861 is not so far removed from the time when rate-supported public libraries were established in Plymouth and Devonport, and the general population breakdown of 1861 can indicate the groups of potential library users, which can be compared with the actual memberships where they are known. Precautionary checks on the later Census statistics, which are not always directly comparable with 1861, have confirmed that the generalisations drawn from the year 1861 remained valid in the later decades also, although the actual percentages naturally varied slightly.

Table 5 shows the occupational statistics, previously quoted in Tables 2 - 4, in a different form; the numbers of men and women over twenty years of age have been converted from actual figures into their percentage distribution between Classes I - VI for each town, and by placing these results in juxtaposition some interesting facts emerge. It will be immediately obvious that there is very little difference in the occupational breakdown of the women of the Three Towns; but there are some significant differences in the occupations of the men, particularly in Classes I, III and V. Table 6 presents the statistics in another form, showing the percentage distribution of each occupation

Table 5. The Three Towns. Occupations in 1861: percentages of men and women over twenty years of age in each Class.

		Men			Women		
		P.	D.	S.	P.	D.	S.
		%	%	%	%	%	%
Class I.	Professional	22	55	55	2	1	1.5
Class II.	Domestic	3	2	3	70	72	72
Class III.	Commercial	16	6	7	1	0.5	0.3
Class IV.	Agricultural	6	1	1	1	0.5	0.2
Class V.	Industrial	43	30	27	20	21	21
Class VI.	Indefinite and non-productive	10	6	7	6	5	5
	Total	100.	100.	100.	100.	100.	100.

Table 6. The Three Towns. Occupations in 1861: the percentage distribution of men over twenty years of age in each Class.

		PLYMOUTH	DEVONPORT	STONEHOUSE	TOTAL
		%	%	%	%
Total distribution		45.	44.	11.	100
Class I.	Professional	24.5	60.9	14.6	100
Class II.	Domestic	50.7	34.5	14.8	100
Class III.	Commercial	68.	24.7	7.3	100
Class IV.	Agricultural	80.3	16.6	3.1	100
Class V.	Industrial	54.7	37.2	8.1	100
Class VI.	Indefinite and non-productive	58.2	31.9	9.9	100

class between the three towns, and the result is even more impressive. Classes II, IV and VI are numerically not very important, as indicated in Table 5, and these will not be considered further. Classes I, III and V, however, require further investigation. Table 6 has shown that, although the simple distribution of the male population between the three towns shows a ratio 45 : 44: 11 between Plymouth, Devonport and Stonehouse respectively, the ratio of Class I is 24.5 : 60.9 : 14.6, a marked difference. Class I itself contains subclasses, and these have been analysed in a similar way in Table 7, showing that the average distribution over the whole Class does not hold good within it; the bulk of government and local government officers appear in Devonport, as do members of the Armed Services; but the reverse holds true in

Table 7. The Three Towns. Occupations in 1861. Class I, Professional class, males over 20 years of age. Sub-classes.

		PLYMOUTH	DEVONPORT	STONEHOUSE	TOTAL
		%	%	%	%
Class I.	Total	24.5	60.9	14.6	100
Sub-class 1.	Government and local government administration	26.5	66.3	7.2	100
Sub-class 2.	Defence of the realm	20.9	62.6	16.5	100
Sub-class 3.	Learned professions	64.7	25.6	9.7	100

the learned professions. Table 8 illustrates this point further by showing the percentage distributions of some of the individual professions.

Table 8. The Three Towns. Occupations in 1861. Learned professions.

	PLYMOUTH	DEVONPORT	STONEHOUSE	TOTAL
	%	%	%	%
Clergy	58	33	9	100
Legal profession	67	29.5	3.5	100
Medical profession	64	28	18	100
Teachers	60	31	9	100

Plymouth also has a strong preponderance of the literary and artistic occupations, and has over 80% of the very few civil engineers. The predominance of Plymouth in Class III, Commercial class, is accounted for to a considerable extent by the inclusion in this Class of the merchant seamen, the largest numerical group; but other occupations show significant distributions although the actual numbers are small. and some of these are shown in Table 9. The commercial importance of Plymouth is strongly reflected in these typical occupations, from the merchant to his humble clerks, and the associated businesses of insurance and accountancy. The Industrial Class, Class V, contains 203 occupations, and although Table 5 shows that between 27% and 43% of the individual populations are engaged in this class of work, the numbers in most occupations are small and fairly widely spread. Plymouth has representation in 157 of the listed occupations, Devonport has only 104, and Stonehouse a meagre 39 which are unlikely to have been all carried

on in that primarily residential area. Table 10 shows a few of the more interesting occupations in the Industrial Class. It is clear

Table 9. The Three Towns. Occupations in 1861. Commercial class.

	PLYMOUTH	DEVONPORT	STONEHOUSE	TOTAL
	%	%	%	%
Seamen (Merchant Navy)	64	27	9	100
Merchants	83.5	11	5.5	100
Bankers	67	33	-	100
Insurance	79	16	5	100
Accountants	60	31	9	100
Clerks	82	6	12	100

Table 10. The Three Towns. Occupations in 1861. Industrial class.

	PLYMOUTH	DEVONPORT	STONEHOUSE	TOTAL
	%	%	%	%
Booktrade	77	18	5	100
Engine and machine making	25	72	3	100
Shipbuilders/shipwrights	23	72	5	100
Carpenters/joiners	53	37	10	100
Masons, pavior	68	25	7	100
Plumbers/painters/glaziers	55	32	13	100
Cloth manufacturing	92	6	2	100
Drapers/mercers	61	25	14	100
Food and drink suppliers	58	31	11	100
Blacksmiths	36	59	5	100

that the basic services to maintain the population were distributed in roughly the same proportion as the total populations of Plymouth, Devonport and Stonehouse which was then 49 : 40 : 11; for example, the food and drink industry generally and the main trades within the building industry, although there is still some bias in favour of Plymouth. The less immediate needs, such as drapery and the booktrade, show a much stronger concentration in Plymouth. The engineering industry and shipbuilding industry is heavily concentrated at Devonport, showing the influence of the Dockyard, and its ancillary trades such as blacksmiths. One final point to be noticed in the occupation breakdown is that Class VI contains labourers whose work is not associated with any of the specific occupation sub-classes, i.e. they form a general reservoir of

unskilled labour. The total in the Three Towns exceeds 2,200, of which 58% were in Plymouth, 32% Devonport, and 10% Stonehouse, which suggests that the occupations in Devonport and Stonehouse were less diffuse than in Plymouth, for normally a labourer would be entered under the general heading "Others" which followed each trade group. Some of the Devonport general labourers were probably those who sought any occasional job which the Dockyard might offer.

The distribution of the adult female population requires little comment, for it has been shown in Table 5 to be overwhelmingly in the Domestic Class. The further breakdown of that class into sub-classes shows little of significance. The percentage of non-wage-earners varied from 55% in Plymouth to 59% at Devonport, with Stonehouse exactly in the middle. Those employed in domestic service formed about 11% in Plymouth, 9% in Devonport, and 10% in Stonehouse. None of these seem significant. The Industrial Class occupations which were numerically most important in each town were those connected with dress and fashion generally, while other female occupations were mainly in the food and drink industry, or lodging-housekeeping.

This closer look at the occupations of the Three Towns has confirmed in a quantitative way the general qualitative expectations aroused by their histories and general characters. It also strongly suggests that Plymouth had a middle class consisting largely of the learned and mercantile professions, whereas the professional classes (which are normally equated with middle class status) at Devonport and Stonehouse consisted of a large element of servicemen. This is likely to be significant when considering the membership and success of libraries, as the fortunes of peace and war tend to cause mobility rather than stability among the members of the Armed Services and any organisations dependent upon their support could well reflect this. Yet the importance of the Armed Services in the Three Towns has to be fully appreciated as they formed a large community which was equally as deserving of library provision as the civilian population. A simple way of emphasising this is to recognise that in 1861 one in two of the adult male population of Stonehouse and Devonport was in the Army, Navy or Royal Marines, with a comparable ratio of one in five in Plymouth, and an overall ratio of more than one in four of the total adult male population of the Three Towns. The 1871 figures were roughly the same,

and in 1891 the overall ratio was still one in five although the Plymouth ratio had declined to one in eleven. Not only must these servicemen be noted as an important part of the population, but it must also be remembered that many of them had their families living in the area. On the other hand, many hundreds of naval men recorded in the Censuses from 1851 were transient, on board ships which happened to be in the port on the date of the Census return. For example, the 1861 figures for Devonport include the crews of seven warships which happened to be in port in addition to the crews of the flagship, gunnery ship, and other vessels on regular duty at the port. Similarly, Plymouth's figures include merchant seamen on board coasting and foreign vessels as well as the native seamen of the town.

The population of the Three Towns was therefore by no means a permanently resident one, although the majority of people did have their homes here. Not only did the servicemen and their families contribute a fluid element, but from the arrival of the railway in 1848 there were always passengers awaiting emigration or general shipping passages. Although the extent of fluidity of the population cannot be gauged with any accuracy, some indication is given by the numbers of people who were not born in the area. The figures in the Census are divided by county of birth, and from them it emerges that about 68% of the population of the Three Towns was born in Devonshire and over 11% in Cornwall, giving a "local" population of about 80%. London and the Home Counties came next with over 6%, Ireland 3.8%, and the three other southwestern counties together only 2.4%. The comparatively high number of Irish was evidently a reflection of the hardships in Ireland at the time, which led to the hunt for work elsewhere and mass emigration.

2.5.3 Housing and accommodation

One of the factors which can influencethe establishment of libraries is the availability of suitable accommodation in which to read quietly, but the Three Towns did not have a good record in their housing provision. It was only at the end of the nineteenth-century that the local authorities had power to act in this matter and begin to provide council houses. For most of the period under consideration the civilian population was dependent upon the provision of private houses, and the general effect was that the wealthier element of the

was resident in either large houses in the countryside around the growing conurbation or in neat terraced houses in the suburbs, according to their respective means. The majority of the population was resident in tenements in the older parts of the town, where overcrowding existed to a serious degree throughout the nineteenth-century. Stonehouse has already been described as containing particularly black areas of disease and overcrowding, but neither Plymouth nor Devonport were much better although they had more land upon which houses could be built. Table 11 provides a rough idea of the situation 1801 - 1911, although the population figures have not been corrected for the non-resident population as that information is not consistently available; nevertheless, it demonstrates the most important points, that the average population per inhabited house was high throughout the period, but a distinct improvement set in at Plymouth and Devonport before Stonehouse. A clearer idea of the meaning of this overcrowding is given by

Table 11. Housing in the Three Towns 1801 - 1911.

	PLYMOUTH		DEVONPORT		STONEHOUSE	
Year	Inhabited houses	Average no. persons per house	Inhabited houses	Average no. persons per house	Inhabited houses	Average no. persons per house
1801	1,737	9.2	2,352	10.1	358	9.5
1811	2,047	10.2	2,857	10.5	532	9.7
1821	2,384	9.1	3,147	10.7	717	8.4
1831	3,472	9.0	3,394	10.3	976	9.8
1841	4,321	8.5	3,449	9.8	1,069	9.1
1851	5,171	10.1	3,789	10.1	1,172	10.2
1861	6,084	10.3	4,189	12.0	1,245	11.5
1871	7,291	9.4	4,269	11.6	1,340	10.9
1881	7,839	9.4	4,385	11.2	1,380	10.9
1891	9,633	8.7	5,095	10.8	1,434	10.7
1901	13,693	7.9	7,960	8.8	1,516	10.0
1911	16,507	6.8	9,927	8.2	1,481	9.3

examining the tenement situation in 1891, the year by which some improvement of the situation had begun to take place and consequently the brightest situation since the temporary relief in 1841. Table 12 shows the total number of tenements of less than five rooms, the total number of rooms in these tenements, and the population living in them. From these calculations it emerges that the average number of people

per room is well over 1½ persons. A further calculation from the Census tables reveals, however, that at Stonehouse more than 68% of the tenement dwellers were living with an average of two or more per room; at Devonport the comparable figure was 58%, and at Plymouth over 59%. If these figures are translated into percentages of the total population for each town, it reveals that in Stonehouse over 47% of the population was living in accommodation averaging at least two people per room, whilst in Devonport and Plymouth the comparable figure was 36% in each case.

Table 12. Tenement accommodation in the Three Towns in 1891

	PLYMOUTH	DEVONPORT	STONEHOUSE
Tenements of less than 5 rooms	14,385	9,662	3,014
Tenements of 1 room	4,794	3,031	1,263
Tenements of 2 rooms	5,303	3,540	1,104
Tenements of 3 rooms	2,698	2,012	425
Tenements of 4 rooms	1,590	1,079	222
Total number of rooms	29,854	20,455	5,634
Total of occupants	51,092	33,880	10,575
Average occupants per room	1.7	1.7	1.9
Tenants living in accommodation averaging at least 2 per room	30,549	19,662	7,258
% of population in tenements	61%	62%	69%
% of population sharing two persons per room or more	36%	36%	47%
% of population in tenements averaging 1 per room or less	11%	11%	10%

Only 10 - 11% of the tenement population enjoyed accommodation in which the average number of persons per room was one or less; and if it is assumed that the people not living in tenements enjoyed at least that standard (which is by no means certain), it would still only allow about 50% of the populations of Devonport and Plymouth and 40% at Stonehouse a standard which might reasonably be expected to provide conditions of reasonable privacy, even if not quiet, in which to read and study.

Not only do the actual statistics reveal the general shortage of suitable home conditions to encourage reading and studying, but they compare very badly with the national averages. In 1851 the average

number of persons per inhabited house in England and Wales was about five; in the Three Towns it was about double, with averages of ten per house, far in excess of other crowded areas such as London and Liverpool with their average of seven per house. By the end of the century the local figures were much closer to national averages; but it is a reasonable inference that as literacy spread among the working classes, who were the main tenement dwellers in the Three Towns, there must have been as urgent a need for the provision of reading rooms as in any other housing blackspots in England and Wales.

2.5.4 The spread of literacy and education

One of the primary requisites for the establishment of libraries is the obvious one of literacy. Literacy can be defined in many ways, but it is used here in its lowest form of an ability to read, which might in turn lead to a desire for books and libraries.

There must have been some literate and educated people in the Three Towns in the medieval period, in order that the business of manorial administration, local and central government, and commercial ventures could be conducted. It is not, however, until the sixteenth-century that there is local evidence of the spread of literacy through education, and it arose, as might be anticipated, in the only settlement of reasonable size, the town of Plymouth. In 1561 the townsfolk established the Corporation Grammar School by public subscription and endowment. It provided free education to the youths of Plymouth, and some were even assisted to go to Oxford University afterwards (42). The school was probably founded because of the need to educate the future professional men of the town; it provided a classical education, which was evidently not appreciated by many of the townsfolk. One of the early masters, William Kempe, published a treatise *The education of children in learning* in 1588, dedicating it to the Mayor of Plymouth and "his Brethren the Masters of the Towne", and prefacing it by the following pointed comment:

> "Although it be a matter of itself most evident, that the discipline and vertuous bringing up of children in good learning is the very foundation and groundwork of all good in every estate as well private as public: yet such is the corruption and iniquitie of our time, that most men are found very careless and slack to do their duty therein; yea, there want not those that in flat terms affirm it to be

> superfluous, insomuch that they can do well enough (in their own judgement) without it. For what parents in these days have not more care to provide wealth for their children, than wisdom?" (43)

It was Kempe's desire to "allure my neighbours and countrymen" into a "better and more godly consideration" (44). His treatise described what was apparently the course operated by him at the Grammar School. Boys normally entered at the age of seven, and were expected to be able to read and write in English before entry. They were immediately launched into the elements of a classical education, eventually passing from fluency in Latin to the study of Greek and Hebrew at the age of twelve, then logic, rhetoric, arithmetic and geometry. At the age of sixteen, boys who had completed this course were considered to have completed their formal education and be able to work without a master. It appears that even poor boys could be admitted for this classical education and exceptional students were sometimes sent to university at public expense.

The development of education in England was seriously disrupted by the years of political unrest culminating with the Civil War, and afterwards more complex and rigid class structures emerged, viz. the nobility, the middle class and the working class, the latter two comprising multiple strata within them and more accurately termed middle classes and working classes. Men of the middle classes can be assumed to be literate for this is implicit in their work - the learned professions, landowners, merchants and manufacturers, including the nouveau riche who were founding their fortunes in the Agricultural Revolution and the Industrial Revolution. By the mid eighteenth-century it was common for the wives and daughters of middle class status to be literate also. The education of their children posed no serious problems, for they could afford to pay for private tutors, private schools, or fee-paying places in the old grammar schools. The Plymouth Corporation Grammar School suffered like others from declining endowments, and by 1663 the Master was allowed to take fee-paying pupils for his own profit, as long as he taught forty boys free of charge. Gradually fee-paying pupils became the majority. In the 1820s this grammar school faced competition from newly established Classical and Mathematical Schools in Plymouth and Devonport. Private schools flourished in the Three Towns; most of them were quite small, and they offered a variety of education - some classical, others less academic

and perhaps offering basically an English education with extra options such as French, drawing and music; some were boarding schools, others were day schools. The money and opportunities were generally available for the middle-class section of the local population to be not only literate but also educated. The problems existed for the working class. The social and economic revolutions of the seventeenth and eighteenth-centuries were bringing about urbanisation and the rapid growth of the working class, which formed an increasingly large percentage of the total population of the country and by its very size posed a potential threat to the traditional governors in the upper social hierarchy. The defence adopted at first against the perceived threat was to keep the working class in a state of ignorance, but this began to be modified in favour of providing sufficient education to enable the working class to read the Bible and to know their place in society. Endowed charity schools were established in the seventeenth-century, but were particularly promoted after the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge was established in 1698 and encouraged the work. This movement largely preceded the main development of Devonport and Stonehouse, but Plymouth generally kept pace with these educational developments elsewhere. From about 1640 Hele's Charity began to apply the interest from various endowed lands to the maintenance and education of poor children in the Hospital of Poor's Portion, and this was extended by John Lanyon's bequest in 1674, becoming the Red and Blue Coat Schools, from which children were placed in apprenticeships or domestic posts. The Hospital of Orphans' Aid was another seventeenth-century foundation in which some elementary education was given. In 1785 the Plymouth Benevolent Institution for Educating the Children of the Poor was established by a group of dissenters, and the Dame Hannah Rogers' Charity School was also founded. Such charity schools usually provided only a short elementary education, usually lasting not more than three years, and considered to be complete when a child could read, and possibly write and cypher, although girls were less likely to be taught to write than the boys and were taught housecraft instead. It was normal practice in charity schools for the pupil to be presented with a Bible on leaving, but it was very much a matter of chance whether the pupil retained the scarcely acquired ability to read.

From the end of the eighteenth-century all three of the towns shared in the national movements involved in the spread of education.

The Sunday-school movement, which began in Gloucester in about 1785, spread rapidly throughout the country, and the first Sunday school formed locally was at Plymouth in 1787 (45). The primary objective of the movement was to provide some religious education, but in order to enable the pupils to read their bibles and prayerbooks it was first necessary to teach many of them to read, and a limited amount of elementary education was provided. The earliest Sunday-school at Devonport was in 1806, but the movement became very strong in that town, particularly in connection with the large number of Wesleyian Methodist chapels for Wesley had set some importance on the ability to read. Rowe recorded in his guidebook published about 1825 that at Devonport

> "The various denominations of dissenters have also Sunday-schools, where a vast number of children are instructed in reading, and the principles of religion." (46)

In the early nineteenth-century the Bell and Lancaster schools began to be established in England and Wales, supported respectively by the "National Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church throughout England and Wales", established in 1812, and the "British and Foreign School Society, formed in 1810. These schools became known as the National and British schools respectively, and they spread rapidly because their particular virtue was seen to be their cheapness, through the application of the monitorial system. The Three Towns established many voluntary schools on this principle, with both National and British Society affiliations being represented in the area. The earliest ones adopted the Lancasterian or "British" system, with public schools being founded at Plymouth in 1809 for boys and 1811 for girls, and at Dock in 1809, while Stonehouse also had its British school by 1822.

In 1833 the Government carried out an enquiry into the state of education by means of a census (47). Although the returns were not comprehensive and there are statistical defects, it casts some valuable light on the availability of education in the Three Towns at that date. In particular, it shows how the older schools were joined by a rapid growth of new small daily schools in the 1820s. The original statistics were published by parishes, but these have been presented in Table 13 as the approximately equivalent urban areas. The total provision of places appears to be quite substantial; if the rough measure is taken that about one-sixth of the total population is likely to have been of

school age, it would appear that about 90% of children had a chance to attend either a day school or a Sunday-school, which seems unexpectedly high. If the figures are converted into ratios of scholars to the whole population of each town, the dayschool ratio shows that Plymouth has the most favourable, 1:8.6, followed by Stonehouse, 1:14.9, and Devonport, 1:17.5. A similar comparison of the Sunday-school figures shows that Devonport has by far the most favourable ratio, 1:9.7, with Stonehouse 1:16.5 and Plymouth only 1:30.5 . These are interesting, but as the returns are not complete it would be wrong to place too heavy a reliance upon them, merely noting that the difference in ratios for the day schools and Sunday-schools in Plymouth and Devonport might be accounted for partly by assuming a heavier working class concentration of population at Devonport as well as the importance of the Wesleyan movement. One aspect which is not clear from the 1833 Census is whether the Sunday-school scholars are necessarily all children, for it seems possible that the numbers at Devonport might include some adults - but that is speculation.

Table 13. Schools in the Three Towns in 1833.

Place	Number and type of schools	Scholars
Plymouth	1 Infant school (est. 1827)	?
	63 Day schools: including 6 endowed, 2 grammar,14 day and boarding, at least 16 established since 1820.	2,540
	1 Day and Sunday-school	60
	5 Sunday-schools	1,119
Devonport	25 Infant schools	385
	143 Dayschools including boarding schools, 92 founded since 1820	1,995
	10 Sunday-schools	3,585
Stonehouse	11 Day schools including one day and boarding school	467
	1 Day and Sunday-school	177
	5 Sunday-schools (3 established since 1830)	580
		10,908

In 1833 the Government began to make available grants for the building of schools, and gradually the terms of reference were widened to take into consideration other expenditure such as the salaries of pupil teachers and capitation grants. The grants were awarded on condition that the schools came under the Government's Inspectorate,

but this was gladly accepted and led to the widespread establishment of schools, particularly by the Church of England in conjunction with the National Society. In the Three Towns the growth of the population had led in 1846 to the establishment of several new parishes, and many of these new churches founded day schools. These were very necessary in order to try and retain the existing degree of literacy, for the working class population was expanding at a rate which threatened to outstrip the educational facilities. The Census of 1851 included a special educational enquiry, and the statistics for the municipal boroughs of Plymouth and Devonport are shown separately in it (48), as in Table 14.

Table 14. Schools in Plymouth and Devonport in 1851.

		PLYMOUTH	DEVONPORT
Sunday-schools	number of schools	29	22
	number of scholars	4,544	3,617
	ratio:population	1:11.49	1:10.55
Day schools	number of schools	96	103
	- private	80	86
	- public	16	17
	number of scholars	4,822	5,127
	- private	2,103	2,517
	- public	2,719	2,610
	ratio:population	1:10.82	1:7.44

From these figures it appears that Plymouth had acquired many more Sunday-school places since 1833, but a slightly lower ratio of places in day schools, while the reverse had occurred in Devonport.

It is not always possible to distinguish in these early statistics precisely which schools were included, for although it is usual to interpret this kind of data in the context of civilian schools, it is quite possible that some of the Army, Navy and Royal Marine schools were also included. The latter schools will be mentioned in more detail in the chapter on the libraries of the Armed Services, but their existence needs to be noted at this point.

From the education survey of 1877 onwards the local statistics relate to the civilian schools, and the fullest evidence is available

from Plymouth. In that town in 1877 there were 13,292 children of school age, of whom 11,492 were actually at school; less than one third were in the newly established Board Schools, but the percentage rose rapidly as new buildings were erected or older voluntary schools were taken over. By 1882 there was over 40% in Board Schools, by 1895 more than 50%, by 1898 60% and by 1914 75%. In Devonport the percentage in Board Schools was even higher, 80%. (49) Not only was elementary education available to everyone, but some provision existed for secondary education. After initial experiments of providing special tuition for the senior scholars in cookery and woodwork at central schools in Plymouth, higher grade Board Schools were established in Plymouth and Devonport. At the same time, private enterprise established high schools, such as Plymouth High School for Girls, 1874, and for Boys in 1878, later merged with Mannamead School to become Plymouth College in 1896, remaining independent while the Girls' School was later absorbed by the local education authority.

Technical education has quite a long history in the Three Towns, starting with the various classes provided by the mechanics' institutes which were founded at Plymouth and Devonport in 1825. Classes in Art and Science were particularly strong at Devonport in the 1850s and 1860s, for the Devonport Mechanics' Institute was the examination centre for the whole area and many of its students took the Department of Art and Science's examinations. In 1844 the Admiralty established the Dockyard School which, after some initial experimentation, concentrated mainly on the education of the shipwright and engineer apprentices, until developments in the engineering profession resulted in the establishment of the Keyham Training School for Engineers in 1881. In 1892 the Plymouth Technical Schools were opened, incorporating art, science and technical schools; Devonport followed in 1899, and there was close cooperation between it and the Dockyard School, with many apprentices attending classes at the Technical Schools. There also existed in Plymouth a navigation school which had been established in 1862 in connection with the Mercantile Marine Department of the Board of Trade. In all of these ways, not only had the population of the Three Towns become literate by the end of the nineteenth-century, but some people were acquiring considerable education which demanded the support of books across the whole field of knowledge. (50)

2.5.5 The establishment of the local booktrade.

One of the factors which can affect the growth of libraries is the state of the local booktrade, in all of its aspects from printing and publishing to bookselling and bookbinding. Although it is certainly possible for libraries to be established by acquiring books from non-local sources, it requires overcoming some inertia to do so; and the establishment and maintenance of libraries is much easier if there is a good local bookmarket and bookbindery. Some types of library, such as the commercial circulating libraries, were often very closely linked with the development of the booktrade itself. With these general aspects in mind, the origin and growth of the early booktrade in the Three Towns will be examined, up to such date as it appears that the particular aspects to be considered were either soundly established and flourishing or had actually failed.

Papermaking is the only aspect of the booktrade to actually fail in the area, and any influence of this activity on the booktrade can be dismissed rapidly. White paper had to be imported for writing and printing; brown paper mills were established at Plymouth in 1683/4, but these and others established locally were mostly short-lived (51).

The nearby small town of Tavistock has the proud distinction of being the fifth town in England in which a printing press was established, in about 1525, but this was an isolated attempt and does not seem to have affected the Three Towns. Two volumes surviving from that press show that it was in operation at least 1525 to 1534 at Tavistock Abbey, and it is not known what happened to the press after the dissolution of the Abbey in 1539, although some of the materials might have passed into private hands in Exeter (52). It was not until the mid-seventeenth-century that Devon again had a public printing press but this was only in the form of a travelling press which was temporarily set up in Exeter during the Civil War (53). Local people who wished to have anything printed, whether for private use, or for publication, had to arrange for it to be printed elsewhere, usually in London because of the limitation of printing through the Licensing Act of 1662. Examples are the Petition from the Mayor and townspeople of Plymouth to Parliament in 1648, which was printed by Edward Husband, printer to the House of Commons (54); various writings by Abraham Cheare, a dissenting minister

of Plymouth, were published in London in 1674; Mr. Ratcliffe of Plymouth published his book on shorthand in London in 1687 (56); and a number of individual sermons were printed and published there (57). This did not mean, however, that Plymothians were not involved in the printing and publishing trade. In 1597 John Battersby, a merchant of Plymouth, was granted a patent in succession to Francis Flower for a valuable privilege "including the Grammar and Accidence besides 'the bible' in Latin with notes, called Temellius' bible" (58). Apparently this patent was bad in law, and led to litigation; Battersby sold his interest for £700 to business associates of John Norden to whom James I had granted the new patent (59). At a more lowly level, there were apprentices, and in 1598 John Hancock, son of a Plymouth tailor, became an apprentice to William Parry, stationer of London, for seven years (60).

After the lapse of the Licensing Act, printing spread rapidly in the provinces, although apparently already anticipated by several years in Devon where a printer was established in Exeter by 1683 (61). The first West of England newspaper was published in Exeter in 1714, and it was an Exeter printer who eventually introduced printing into Cornwall, at Truro in 1740 (62). The earliest printer at Plymouth was Daniel Jourdaine; he is stated by Worth to have started printing here in 1696, but although Worth is usually a reliable historian, he quoted no source for his information and no reference to support that date has yet been traced (63); Jourdaine continued in business up to at least 1733-4 for the Corporation Accounts for that year show that Mr. Jourdaine was paid 40s. for printing water leases (64). Meantime he had been joined by at least one competitor, for in 1718 the first Plymouth newspaper, *Plymouth weekly journal*, was published by W. Kent in the first year and E. Kent from 1719 - 1725 (65). It seems likely that Plymouth was not without a printer from then onwards, although no references occur between the Jourdaine reference in 1733-4 and Oliver Adams in 1758. Oliver Adams was the printer of the *Plymouth magazine* in 1758, and further appears in a subscription list in 1764 as "Printer of Plymouth" (66). Robert Weatherly printed in Plymouth from at least 1769 to 1778 (67) and Haydon in 1770 (68). William Andrews, an Exeter printer, came to Plymouth in 1765 (69). The earliest directory of the Three Towns, 1783, shows only Trewman and Haydon as printers (70), but in 1785, according to Pendred there were three firms,

Noble, Trewman & Haydon, and Weatherby (71). Trewman, who was the famous founder of the Exeter newspaper *Trewman's Flying post*, ceased his association with Haydon after 1789 (72) and the latter firm became a long-established major Plymouth firm in the field not only of printing but also bookselling; it was known first as Haydon's (73), then M. Haydon & Son (who held the royal warrant from the Duke of Clarence who visited Plymouth frequently)(74); B. Haydon continued from at least 1792 until well into the nineteenth-century (75), and was often simply called Haydon's. Another wellknown Plymouth firm, Nettletons, also began before 1792 (76) and continued for many years. By 1800 the printing industry, which was also comprehensive of early publishing, was well established in Plymouth, and it continued with success. By 1844 there were 17 printers (77), and by 1861 the printing industry employed over one hundred people in the town (78). Much of the work must have been jobbing printing for the official, commercial and private needs of the population, but a certain amount of book printing was also undertaken. Amongst the earliest important locally printed books are guidebooks such as *PICTURE of Plymouth (1812)*, Rowe's *Perambulation of Dartmoor (1848)*, and Prince's *Worthies of Devon (1810)*.

Printing seems to have been introduced into Dock at the time of the settlement's rapid expansion in the late eighteenth-century. In 1781 A. Gray of Dock was concerned in printing the *Plymouth magazine* (79); and Pendred records only one printer at Dock in 1785, named Sutton (80). The publications of Dock appear to have been of an ephemeral nature until 1791 when Hoxland printed the first local guide (81). In 1799 J. Heydon was printing and publishing (82), and in the next few years the industry was fully established. The first local Dock newspaper was *Plymouth & Dock telegraph* in 1808, followed some twenty years later by *Devonport independent*. The most important book published at Dock was probably Gilbert's *History of Cornwall* (1817), by Congdon & Hearle (83). By the middle of the century there were eleven printers at work in Devonport, which did not achieve such an important printing and publishing industry as Plymouth, but nevertheless achieved a steady industry. Stonehouse appears very poor in comparison, for it does not seem to have had a printer before Gray in 1816 (84), and a somewhat small and irregular representation thereafter.

In each of the three towns the booktrade in the form of bookselling was established long before printing and publishing, and must have depended heavily on the importation of publications from London and Exeter. As might be expected, the earliest record of bookselling is to be found in Plymouth, where in 1641 William Russell was selling a small religious work by Christopher Ielinger, minister at Stonehouse (85). A trade token dated 1659 shows William Weekes to have been a bookseller (86) and an undated but evidently seventeenth-century token was issued by John Williams, stationer (87). References become much more frequent in the next century, with (Benjamin?) Smithurst 1704 (88), 1714 (89) and 1739 (90), Elizabeth Smith 1753 (91), Theophilus Rhodes 1754 and 1756 (92), Robert Weatherly 1759 - 1778 (93), Zach. Freno c. 1763 (94), Henry Whitfield 1759 (95), James Wallis 1763-1789 (96) and a Mr. Wills 1789 and 1791 (97). It seems that bookselling was well represented in the town by 1800, although not recorded in published local directories. A subscription list of 1800 includes T. W. Haydon and T. Richards for fifty copies each, suggesting a large business, while Mr. Rogers took only six copies. In 1812 the earliest guidebook to Plymouth describes the booktrade generally with special reference to the bookselling aspect:

> "The number of booksellers is considerable; but most of them combine the trades of book-binders, stationers, music-sellers, printers, medicine venders, &c. which in the metropolis are considered derogatory to the character of a bookseller. In the year 1807, Messrs. Rees & Curtis, from London, opened a shop here, and have carried on the bookselling business upon a more extensive scale than had been done before by any person in Plymouth. Their shop is well stocked with books of every description, and they have a constant supply of new and standard works from town. There are several printing presses in the town, but they are usually employed in printing advertisements and mercantile papers." (98)

Bookselling seems to have become well established at this point, for directories for 1805-7 and 1809-11 show four and twelve booksellers respectively (99); in 1823 there were eleven booksellers/stationers (100) and in 1844 over twenty (101).

In Dock, a Mrs. Maurice is mentioned in a list of provincial booksellers in 1770 (102), and P.F. Maurice in 1786 (103). In the next few years bookselling became well established by notable firms such as J. Heydon (104), Hoxland (105) and Congdon the printer. In 1800 four Dock booksellers appear on a subscription list - Fraser, Haydon, Phelp and Roach (106), and by 1811 there were nine booksellers/stationers (107).

At Stonehouse, the fashionable residential area for military and government officers and their families in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century, there ought to have been a ready market for literature, but the earliest named bookseller appears to be Huss in 1803 (108). Other firms recorded as booksellers were John Field and William Gray in 1823-4 (109), and in 1844 there were five booksellers listed for Stonehouse (110).

Although Devonport and Stonehouse contained representation of the different aspects of the booktrade, Plymouth remained the most important of the three; not only was it a booktrade centre for the Three Towns, but it had also become important by 1861 in the context of the counties of Devon and Cornwall. Table 15 shows the number of people employed in different aspects of the booktrade in the Three Towns, with Exeter for comparison; Exeter had long held a reputation as a provincial centre of learning; its Cathedral Library dates from the eleventh-century, the town was the seat of the diocese which included Cornwall until 1876, and the general circumstances were such that Exeter was the first place in Devon and Cornwall to establish the printing industry when the lapse of the *Licensing Act* enabled that industry to spread. It has already been shown that Plymouth owed its printing industry to influence from Exeter, but within a century the latter had been overshadowed numerically by the former. Truro had only about one quarter the number of the Exeter people involved in the booktrade.

Table 15. The booktrade in the Three Towns and Exeter 1861.

	Number of persons in employment							
	PLYMOUTH		DEVONPORT		STONEHOUSE		EXETER	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Booksellers/publishers	43	3	7	2	5	1	36	5
Bookbinders	31	16	1	3	-	-	25	1
Printers	99	3	29	-	6	-	55	-
Newspaper agents	5	-	3	-	1	-	4	-
Others in publications	5	3	2	1	-	1	3	6
Total	183	25	42	6	12	2	123	12

The last group in Table 15, "Others dealing in publications", probably conceals a few librarians, for the profession was not recognised clearly enough to receive a separate heading; the association of commercial circulating libraries with the booktrade and the consequent claim of their owners to the title "librarian" made it a natural development to add the few persons specifying librarian as their occupation into the booktrade figures. In 1871 the Occupation Census figures for men showed the addition of the title "News-room keeper" to the formerly single heading "Newspaper agent", and in that year there was a total of 21 "newspaper agents/newsroom keepers" for Plymouth and Devonport, and 16 for Exeter. The breakdown for females in the same year substituted "Book agent, librarian" for the heading "Others engaged in publications", and showed that Plymouth and Devonport had a total of three in that category, Exeter nil. In 1881 the occupation of "Librarian" was simply added to the same line as "Publisher, bookseller", and there is a lack of detailed local information in the published figures for that year. Even in 1891 it seems that librarians were too few to merit separate distinction. The booktrade figures for Plymouth and Devonport in that year are shown in Table 16; by that date the numbers involved in Plymouth's booktrade alone were far in excess of the total booktrade figures for the whole of the county of Cornwall.

Table 16. The booktrade in Plymouth and Devonport in 1891

	PLYMOUTH		DEVONPORT	
	M	F	M	F
Publisher, bookseller, librarian	48	16	12	8
Bookbinder	35	36	5	5
Printer	409	1	104	-
Newspaper agent, newsroom keeper	31	12	6	2
	523	65	127	15

In 1891 the headings in the Professional Class were further expanded under the section "Literary and scientific" to include not only "author, editor, journalist, reporter, short-hand writer, persons engaged in scientific pursuit", but also the miscellaneous heading "Literary, scientific, institution - service, etc.", in which Plymouth boasted four male employees and Devonport one; these might possibly be identified with the professional staff of the rate-supported public libraries, but the pre-1900 Census figures are generally unhelpful over librarians.

2.5.6 Literature, science and the fine arts

The presence of a strong literary tradition in an area can act as a powerful incentive to the establishment and development of libraries, but this seems, regretably, to have been a stimulus which was absent from the Three Towns. Many celebrated names to be found in the *Dictionary of national biography* belong to people who were natives of or associated in some way with the area, particularly with Plymouth, the oldest of the three towns; but none of them are names in the front rank of literature - there was no local genius akin to Shakespeare, Dickens or Wordsworth. Local genius has been of a more practical bent, through the exploits of explorers such as Drake and Hawkins, and in later years Scott of Antarctic fame. The artist's brush has achieved a much higher reputation for the Three Towns than the author's pen, for several major artists are associated with the immediate neighbourhood - Sir Joshua Reynolds, Sir Charles Lock Eastlake, Benjamin Robert Haydon, James Northcote, and Samuel Prout - and many less famous landscape painters. Many scientists and inventors have local connections too: Sir William Snow Harris who invented the lightning conductor for ships; Dr. Jonathan Hearder the blind chemist and electrician; William Elford Leach the naturalist; William Cookworthy the china manufacturer; C. Spence Bate, an authority on Crustacea; J.C. Adams, the astronomer who discovered the planet Neptune; to name but a few. Although scientific and technical papers have been produced as the result of their work, this is not the kind of literature to inspire the general love of literature, although the pursuit of scientific research has led to the foundation of an important scientific library in the form of the Scientific Library of the Plymouth Institution.

Although the Three Towns have not produced a first-rank writer in the field of imaginative literature, it has made some contribution to the general corpus of literature through occasional works by its men of letters and more prolific writings by a few mediocre authors. According to Camden, the literary history of the area began as far back as the eleventh-century, when Ealphage was the vicar of St. Andrew's (111); but it is not until the sixteenth-century that works were produced which have survived, such as Sir John Hawkins' account of his voyage in 1567-8 to San Juan de Ulloa, and John Sparke's account of Hawkins' second

Guiana voyage in 1564. William Kempe's treatise on the education of children in 1588 has already been quoted in an earlier section. The surviving literature from local authors over the next century is mainly theological including several books of sermons, from clergy such as John Quick, Joseph Glanvill, and Abraham Cheare; eighteenth-century theologians include Dr. Zachary Mudge, vicar of St. Andrews, and friend of Reynolds and Northcote, through whom he made the acquaintance of Dr. Samuel Johnson who thought highly of him. Mudge published several volumes of sermons and religious works, as did Dr. Robert Hawker, vicar of Charles Church 1784-1827. A number of local medical men have published works which have been recognised as important in the literature of medicine. Dr. James Yonge, the naval surgeon, produced monographs on the use of turpentine and the flap technique in amputation; Dr. Huxham tried to show the relationship between disease and atmospheric conditions; Dr. Richard Dunning was closely involved with Jenner in the development of the innoculation against smallpox, and wrote pamphlets on this. These were all late seventeenth-century or eighteenth-century publications. In the late eighteenth-century Plymouth produced a popular but second-rank lady novelist, Mrs. Parsons, who took up literature as a means of livelihood after the business failure and death of her husband left her with several children to support.

The writer of *PICTURE of Plymouth*, published in 1812, is known to be Henry Woollcombe, a solicitor and civic leader whose publication and activities will be frequently mentioned in connection with libraries. He wrote:

> "Plymouth has not acquired any considerable literary character, though it has been conspicuous at various periods as the residence of eminent men. ... The Arts have not flourished much in Plymouth; and indeed, until of late, painting has been very little known publicly, though many individuals have of course prized its powers. There are no private collections in the town, and very few individual paintings of any celebrity. Mr. Bowden, a stationer and bookseller, has lately had sufficient enterprise to erect a gallery ... where many pictures are now exhibiting for sale; .... There is not one specimen of Sculpture in the town .... It can, indeed, be hardly expected, that a provincial town should afford any display of an art so little known and cherished even in the capital. Music is said not to be much in vogue here; there are concerts in the winter, but no permanent musical establishment. ... Plymouth has not given birth to any Poet of the first class .... With respect to Literature, in general, it is not to be expected to prevail much in a sea port, amidst the bustle of war, and the enterprise of commercial speculations." (112)

This glum picture of Plymouth, showing that it was virtually unaware of literature and the fine arts, was, at the very time it was written, beginning to change. Indeed, Henry Woollcombe himself was aware of this, and even played a considerable part in the awakening. He drew attention to the newly established proprietary library as an example of some growing taste for literature; and during the same year in which he published his guidebook, he established the Plymouth Institution, which was a literary and philosophical society with a strong initial bias towards science but an ever increasing movement to literature and fine arts also.

The nineteenth-century saw the rapid spread of popular taste for literature, science and the fine arts, made manifest in numerous local organisations involved in popular lectures and classes, such as the Mechanics' Institutes, and large numbers of small societies and bookclubs which provided, with varying degrees of success, for the working class population of the Three Towns. Numerous standard works were written by local authors on the local flora, fauna, geology, history, archaeology, architecture, and many local ladies and gentlemen turned their talents to the writing of poetry, but only very few reached a standard of recognisable literary merit such as that exhibited by the Devonport schoolmaster and poet, Carrington. Periodicals and magazines were published, but very few succeeded in achieving support for more than half a dozen issues, for example, *Philo-Danmonian* lasted six months in 1830, *South Devon literary chronicle* was published only in 1847, and many other short-lived titles can be traced in Worth's important *Three Towns' bibliotheca* (113). Newspapers, however, were more successful, and the Three Towns enjoyed several local papers in the nineteenth-century; their history and bibliography has been adequately documented in various studies (114), the detail of which need not be given here; for this brief sketch of the nineteenth-century has been only to provide a general perspective. The important point to emerge from this consideration of literature and the fine arts in the Three Towns is that they were generally not significant until after 1800, and are unlikely therefore to have influenced the development of libraries before then; nor were they particularly strongly developed to make a deep impression on libraries thereafter.

2.6 SOME IMPRESSIONS AND EXPECTATIONS.

A number of general impressions and expectations about the library history of the Three Towns can be drawn from the foregoing examination of the history and character of the Three Towns and the local situation in respect of some factors which are usually considered to influence the development of libraries.

1. Plymouth was the only one of the Three Towns to have achieved a recognisable urban population and borough status before the end of the Middle Ages. Theoretically, therefore, there could have been medieval libraries in Plymouth. The much later development, at the end of the eighteenth-century, of the urban areas of Dock and Stonehouse, suggests that the earliest type of libraries likely to be found in them might be the varieties of subscription libraries which were generally widespread by 1800.

2. Although the Three Towns are situated in the far Southwest, and were comparatively isolated by land communications until the late eighteenth-century, they enjoyed excellent communications by sea, both coastwise and foreign. The trade and commerce of Plymouth brought it into contact with London and other major ports where libraries and bookmarkets existed, and consequently it is not likely that the inhabitants of the Three Towns were ignorant of contemporary library developments in such places. The professional men of the Three Towns would probably have been students at the Universities of Oxford, Cambridge, Edinburgh, etc., and would be aware of the libraries there.

3. However, it might have been difficult to obtain books locally; for although there were booksellers in Plymouth from the mid seventeenth-century, they normally combined bookselling with other trades, and it was not until about 1807 that the first large specialist bookshop was established in the Three Towns, with regular supplies of new books from London and elsewhere. This does suggest that there might have been an inertia effect on the establishment of libraries, which would have had to have been deliberately overcome by the particular enthusiasm of an individual or group of individuals.

4. The population was heavily engaged in practical occupations and commerce which seems to have coloured their early attitude of little

apparent inclination towards learning for the love of it, or to literary culture generally. It was not until the early nineteenth-century that a serious interest in literature and the arts began to be demonstrated. This suggests that libraries will be mainly post-1800.

5. There were differences in the populations and occupations of the Three Towns which might prove significant. After the establishment of Dock, Plymouth concentrated on a lucrative livelihood in commerce and trade; the middle class population was numerous and wealthy, and the total population was fairly stable with steady growth. This suggests that any libraries in Plymouth might have had stable histories. Devonport's population, by contrast, was overwhelmingly a Dockyard and Armed Services population. There was only a small civilian middle class population, but many professional officers in the transient Armed Services. The development of middle class libraries in Devonport is likely to reflect this in some way, such as in terms of lack of stability, of special membership, or of special libraries for the Armed Services. Stonehouse, between Plymouth and Devonport, had little life of its own, being dominated by the two larger neighbours. The total population of the Three Towns was sufficiently large in the nineteenth-century to provide potential support for several of the varieties of working class libraries which could be found nationally.

Therefore, judging entirely by the histories and characters of the Three Towns, it is expected that the oldest libraries, the richest variety, and perhaps the greatest number of libraries, might be found in Plymouth; with Devonport next, and Stonehouse far behind. As local communications and transport improved, and the three urban areas grew towards each other, some joint libraries might have been established for the Three Towns instead of the individual towns.

It will be interesting to find out, through the study of the individual libraries, whether these logical expectations did in fact materialise. However, one of the interesting factors influencing library development is the unexpected, which can take the shape of individual initiatives by local people, or intervention of an external agency, such as the Government.

Having thus considered some of the theoretical possibilities, it is now time to launch into the examination of the realities.

CHAPTER THREE. LIBRARIES BEFORE c. 1750.

3.1 Before the Norman Conquest.

One of the characteristics distinguishing history from prehistory is the presence of literacy, and literacy spread to Britain through the Romans. The remains of Roman civilisation are plentiful in much of Britain, and Irwin has put forward a plausible, albeit as yet unproven, case for the presence of libraries in Britain such as existed in Roman temples and villas in their own country (1). In the far Southwest, Exeter was established as a garrison town, and was thought until recently to mark the most westerly point of Roman roads; it is now believed that some further penetration took place into west Devon and Cornwall, probably mainly connected with the need for the Cornish tin trade in the latter part of the Roman occupation of Britain. At the very least, the Romans did strongly influence the contemporary British settlement around Plymouth Sound; but although there is growing speculation that such settlement might have been quite significant (2) and it seems likely that there could have been contact with Roman literacy as well as Roman goods, it seems safe to dismiss the idea of any libraries being in the immediate vicinity - although if Irwin's ideas are correct it would seem possible that it was during the Roman period that the first library might have existed in Devon, at Exeter.

In the Dark Ages which followed the withdrawal of the Roman Army the contact with literacy was not forgotten, although the evidence in Devon and Cornwall takes the form of crudely inscribed memorial stones dating from the sixth and seventh centuries. The Celtic lands of Devon and Cornwall were considerably depopulated in the fifth and sixth centuries for a combination of reasons - the raids by the Irish, the ravages of yellow fever epidemics, and fear of the Anglo-Saxons who had begun their invasion of Southeast England; large numbers left Devon and Cornwall, the Kingdom of Dumnonia, for Brittany, and the land was left sparsely populated. The emergence of Celtic Christianity, with its important monastic centres in Ireland and Scotland producing books in their scriptoria and starting small libraries, led to Devon and Cornwall being the main routes of travel between the monastic centres and their missionary work on the Continent. The sparsely settled state of the two counties made it attractive to the eremitic movement,

and these Celtic "saints" founded their individual cells in secluded places. Their names are still remembered in many Cornish placenames, although in Devon the Saxon names have supplanted them. The names of St. Budoc (3) and St. Indractus (4) are linked traditionally with the immediate area of the Three Towns, but there is no evidence of any literary activity locally. Another virtual blank is drawn in west Devon and Cornwall in the Anglo-Saxon period. The Saxons reached east Devon and began to settle there in the seventh-century, and by the late eighth-century the county had been peaceably absorbed into Wessex as the shire "Defnas", the Saxon derivation from the old name "Dumnonia"; but although the eastern boundary of the county was fixed, the western border was not fixed until the tenth-century conquest of Cornwall, and the land along the natural boundary of the Tamar was until then a relatively unstable frontier zone.

The typical Saxon settlement was a manor in a sheltered valley with water supply, arable, pasture and woodland, and several of these were established on the site of the Three Towns, their names being recorded in the Domesday Survey and being perpetuated in the modern names to be found in the area, including Sutton, Stonehouse and Stoke Damerel. Other organisations began to appear in Saxon times, particularly the network of churches and monasteries established by King Alfred and his successors as part of their campaigns to re-establish literacy and learning. It would have been folly to establish any sizeable community on the open coast around Plymouth Sound because of the danger of sea-raids, particularly from the Vikings; but not far away, at Plympton, there was a small Saxon monastery reputedly founded in the time of Alfred the Great, and at Tavistock there was the large, rich Abbey of St. Rumon. No manuscripts or books have survived from either of these establishments, nor is it known whether they did produce any books or have libraries. Tavistock Abbey was the subject of an attack by the Danes in 997:

> "997. In this year the host (Danes) went round Devonshire ... and entered the estuary of the Tamar, and so up it until they came to Lydford. There they burned and slew everything they met, and burnt to the ground Ordwulf's abbey church at Tavistock, carrying off an indescribable amount of plunder with them to the ships." (5)

Nevertheless church government can be traced in Devon and Cornwall from the Saxon period; in 909 the See of Sherborne which had covered Somerset, Devon and Cornwall, was split up into three, with the See of Devon

having its seat at Crediton, the home town of the great Saxon missionary St. Boniface; a See of Cornwall was established with its seat at St. Germans. In the next century these arrangements were altered, the sees of Cornwall and Devon were united, and the seat was moved to Exeter in 1040, where the first archbishop, Leofric, established the Cathedral Library (6). Urban communities were established, the first four towns in Devon being set up in the time of Alfred as burghs for defence against the Danes, at Exeter, Barnstaple, Totnes and Lydford; and in the tenth century the framework for government, law and order further appeared with the division of the counties into hundreds. Thus, by the time of the Norman Conquest, there existed in Devon and Cornwall a variety of religious, urban, rural and governmental structures; a thin layer of literacy and education must have existed amongst those people who were responsible for matters such as church government, local administration, etc., but very little literature has survived, with the exception of the famous *Exeter Book* in the Exeter Cathedral Library which contains some Anglo-Saxon poetry, and the *Bodmin Gospels*, the only Cornish monastic book that has survived from this period, although it was probably written in France (7).

3.2 From the Norman Conquest to the Reformation.

Until the Norman Conquest the conditions prevailing on the peninsula between the Tamar and Plym rivers were unfavourable to any significant settlement because of the general lack of safety and stability, although a variety of communities and administrative frameworks had been set up in the surrounding counties and even the first library in Exeter. After the Norman Conquest one of the small Saxon manors gradually began to develop into an urban community, at Sutton. Its history has already been traced in the previous chapter, showing how it acquired commercial and military functions, and some form of local government even before its official incorporation as a borough in 1439. Plymouth, as it then became known, has had a church since at least the thirteenth-century, although tradition takes it back to Saxon times. The Priors of Plympton, a rich new foundation on the site of the earlier Saxon monastery, were lords of the manor of Sutton Prior until incorporation, and the Abbot of Buckland also had rights in the area; so there was a monastic presence in the area, and it was in the medieval monasteries of the country that education, literacy and books

were generally to be found. The mendicant orders of friars were also present in the area, although the archives are deficient and some of the evidence is based upon the survival of buildings and place-names. The Dominican Order of teachers and preachers had only two recognised houses in Devon and Cornwall, at Exeter and Truro, but a Black Friars' monastery building in Plymouth dates from the early fifteenth-century. The White Friars, or Carmelites, must have existed in the town before 1314, and became landed proprietors with a church and extensive buildings at the eastern end of the town. The Franciscans had settled at Exeter and Bodmin before 1240, but the earliest definite record of their presence in Plymouth is a grant of land to them in 1384. Did any of these religious bodies establish libraries in Plymouth? Or even in the counties of Devon and Cornwall, thereby beginning to promote a cultural environment which might have influenced the local settlement in some way?

The evidence for monastic books and libraries comes from two sources, contemporary records and surviving books. It was apparently the need of the mendicant orders to consult books during their journeys throughout the country that resulted in the compilation of medieval union lists, showing in which monastic foundations copies of various works could be found. The earliest list, *Registrum Anglie de libris doctorum et auctorum veterum,* is thought to have been compiled by the Franciscans in about the late thirteenth-century; it was revised in about 1410 by a Benedictine monk, John Boston of Bury; and a third list, *Tabula septem custodiorum,* was probably of intermediate date. These lists have been studied by M.R. James, who produced a comparative table of the locations and orders included in these union lists (8). The locations in the counties of Devon and Cornwall were:

Cornwall	Bodmin. Augustinian priory.
	Launceston. Augustinian priory.
Devon	Dunkeswell. Cistercian abbey.
	Buckfastleigh. Cisterican Abbey.
	Exeter. Cathedral
	Totnes. Benedictine alien priory.
	Torre. Premonstratensian abbey.
	Plympton. Augustinian priory.

James himself knew of no surviving books from Launceston, Plympton, Dunkeswell, Totnes or Torre; he knew of a few from Bodmin and Buckfast-

leigh; and found considerable remains only at Exeter Cathedral, including a catalogue. More recent studies by Ker (9) have added considerable information about surviving books, but again the only substantial remains are at Exeter Cathedral, in the library established by Leofric. Although medieval Plymouth was ringed around by nearby monastic establishments known to have possessed books, if not libraries, there is no evidence of monastic books in Plymouth, nor is there any evidence that there were ever substantial collections in the surrounding monastic foundations. Davis's list of cartularies (10) adds little to the picture, although he lists a few records surviving from medieval religious foundations from which no books survive. Figure 8 shows the locations of the medieval religious houses in Devon and Cornwall which are known to have contained books and/or from which books survive.

Plymouth contained no academic institution to inspire the development of book collections such as at Oxford and Cambridge. It did contain a few guilds, but these do not appear to have had any connection with reading and books, unlike the Guild of Kalendars at Bristol which established a library. At Plymouth the known guilds were the general freemen's guild, the merchant guild which regulated trade, a religious guild of Corpus Christi and a couple of individual craft guilds. Although the references to medieval guilds are scarce in the Plymouth records, these organisations left their mark through the centuries, for the centre of municipal administration is still named the Guildhall and not the "Townhall". There must have been municipal records, including Charters, from the time of Plymouth's incorporation, but very little survives from the medieval period except a series of corporation accounts which date from 1486 and are fairly complete from that year onwards (11). A few manorial records have survived from the fourteenth-century onwards in relation to the manor of Stonehouse, but the earliest records of the manor of Stoke Damerel were destroyed by fire in about the late eighteenth-century.

Even though the medieval period did not, as far as is known, see the establishment of any libraries in the area of the Three Towns or in the town of Plymouth, it was during this period that the local communities became more complex, even large in the case of Plymouth, and the need emerged to create and maintain records of various kinds. Although there seems to be no evidence of book production or scriptoria,

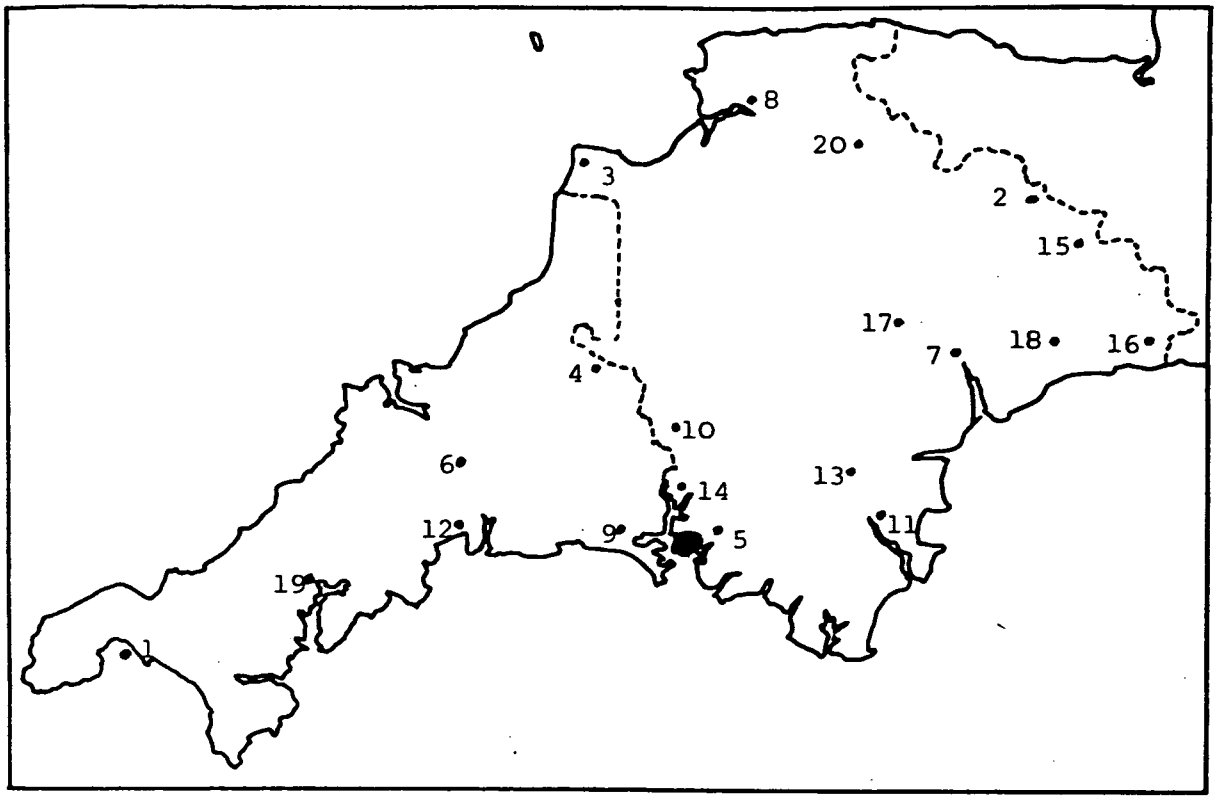


Fig. 8 Medieval religious houses which possessed books

Key to the orders and foundations.

1. St. Michael's Mount. Archpresbytery.
2. Canonsleigh. Augustinian.
3. Hartland. Augustinian
4. Launceston. Augustinian.
5. Plympton. Augustinian.
6. Bodmin. Benedictine, and Franciscan.
7. Exeter. Benedictine; Dominican; Franciscan; Cathedral.
8. Pilton. Benedictine.
9. St. Germans. Benedictine, later Augustinian.
10. Tavistock. Bendictine
11. Totnes. Benedictine alien.
12. Tywardreath. Benedictine alien.
13. Buckfast. Cistercian.
14. Buckland. Cistercian.
15. Dunkeswell. Cistercian.
16. Newenham. Cistercian.
17. Crediton. Collegiate church.
18. Ottery St. Mary. Parish church.
19. Truro. Dominican.
20. South Molton. Parish church.

(based on information in KER's *Medieval libraries of Great Britain*)

books could be found in the counties of Devon and Cornwall, including the vicinity of the town of Plymouth and the manors of Stonehouse and Stoke Damerel. Probably the sites listed in the *Registrum* were even deserving of the appellation "libraries", although the evidence of surviving books can only prove this in the case of Exeter Cathedral. All of these things were instrumental in gradually forming a thin veneer of literacy and awareness of books among the governing class and administrators in the community. At the very end of the medieval period the printing press made an unexpected appearance in the county of Devon, at Tavistock Abbey not far from Plymouth; two surviving works from this press show that it was in operation from at least 1525 to 1534, and it is thought that after the dissolution of the monastery some of the materials might have passed into private hands in Exeter, although no further publications resulted. Nevertheless, this does show that something was known of printed books in the area, and indeed it would be surprising if some copies had not already found their way into Plymouth from London through at least merchants involved in the coasting trade.

3.3 The origin and history of private libraries in the Three Towns.

The second half of the sixteenth-century was a time of much prosperity for the town of Plymouth, with its involvement in voyages of discovery and new trade contacts, and the surge in military activity. The need for literacy and education was appreciated to at least a limited extent, as was shown by the foundation of the Corporation Grammar School in 1561 through public subscription. It provided a classical education, which presupposes that a basic literacy in English had already been acquired. It seems reasonable to assume that there existed some literacy amongst those who were involved in the growing trade and commerce, and that the grammar school was a means to educate the future professional men of the area. There is no indication that literacy was seen as anything more than an essential aid to business, and the concept of a love of books and learning for its own sake had yet to emerge. Probably many people were in a similar situation to Sir Francis Drake, who has been described by a biographer as "ill-educated but not illiterate", having been taught to read and educated primarily on the *Bible* and Foxe's *Book of martyrs* (12). Books were scarce

but could be obtained from London or Oxford and Cambridge by those with the money and inclination. The townsfolk of Plymouth seem to have contained many who had the money; but did they have the inclination?

Wills provide a useful guide to the existence of books in private hands, and the attitude of their owners to them. The local destruction of deposited wills and the destruction of the probate records for the Diocese of Exeter in 1942 means that the number of original wills are limited, but fortunately it has been possible to examine photocopies of a large group of Plymouth wills from the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, and the abstracts of Devon wills which were compiled before 1942. Together, they cast considerable light on the attitude towards books shown by people who lived in the Three Towns.

The group of Plymouth wills proved before the Prerogative Court of Canterbury (13) consists of 152 wills, of which two were pre-1500, fifty were sixteenth-century, ninety eight were seventeenth-century and two were post 1700. The majority were written between 1550 and 1650. Most of the wills stated the occupation of the testators, which were: 58 merchants, 18 seamen, 16 gentlemen, 9 widows and spinsters, 4 professional men, 3 tradesmen, 1 servant and 1 fisherman; the other 42 were not stated, but among the occupations which were specified there are many of the potentially most interesting groups, the merchants, who might be expected to afford books, some gentlemen who might have had the education to appreciate and collect books, and some professional men who might have had special need of books. What actually emerged was that only eight out of the 152 wills mentioned books, and these were in the wills of 2 merchants, 1 gentleman, 2 seamen, and 3 professional men. Only one of these eight was dated before 1600, and that was the will of the merchant Martin Whyte, who in 1598 bequeathed:

> "To the Churchwardens of the town of Plymouth one book of martyrs, bound with boards to remain within the parish church chained in some place." (14)

This seems to be the earliest reference to public access to any book in the Three Towns and will be referred to again later in connection with endowed libraries. The other wills contain varying degrees of information and are reviewed in a broadly chronological order. The next will to mention books is the one made by William Kemp (15), master of the Grammar School and author of the treatise on education which has already been mentioned; he simply bequeathed "all my bookes" to his son William Kemp

with no indication of the size of his collection. Similarly, in 1622 the physician Richard Isteed (16) left his books entirely to his son Thomas, except such English divinity books as his executors thought suitable for the use of his wife and children. Richard King of Plymouth, a purser, died in 1627 and his will again mentions "all my books" but no details (17). Another seaman, Francis Greip, apparently had some books besides those of relevance to his occupation, for in 1640 he made the bequest that if either of his sons was inclined to be a seaman he should have "all my plottes and other Instruments that belong to the Seas", the other son to have all his books except "my sea-bookes which he shall have that useth the Seas" (18). Matthew Nichols of Plymouth, a preacher, whose will was proved in 1631 seems to have had a substantial collection which he instructed his three executors to sort out. His wife was instructed to keep such books as might be of use to his son John, and in this she was to be advised by his friend John Vincent; his papers and notes were to be disposed of by Mr. Vincent and the other two executors, one of whom was Abraham Sherwill, but first they were to sort out anything they considered fit to be published, of which his wife was to have the benefit, and anything which might help his son in his studies, and anything which might be useful "for the public good of the Church", the latter presumably referring to making it available through publication and not by public access to manuscripts. Finally, each of his executors was to choose a book from his study, and Abraham Sherwill was to choose "out of my best English books" a volume each for his father, mother, wife, and her brother and sister (19). Thomas Sherwill, a well known and wealthy merchant, did not refer specifically in his will dated 1627 to any books in his own possession, but made provision for one group of nephews and nieces to receive one or more divinity books to the value of 5s., and another group to receive *"The practise of Christianitie"* or some "good book" of the same value(20). That will is of particular interest because it seems to suggest the purchase of multiple copies of the specified book or its equivalent, and if that is the correct interpretation it seems to presuppose no particular difficulty in obtaining these works. The last will in this group is much later, 1700, by Sir George Treby, gentleman, who desired that "all my books, especially Law bookes be divided between my two sonns in such manner as my Executors shall think fitt". (21)

The first group of wills might be expected to be the most interesting, for the Prerogative Court of Canterbury normally contains

the wills of important people and those whose property was in more than one Diocese, viz. those who were probably amongst the more wealthy inhabitants of a place. The wills of the Diocesan Probate Registry might be expected to be of a somewhat humbler cross-section of the population, although the distinctions drawn above are only generalisations and not hard divisions. In the *Abstracts of Devon wills* produced by Olive Moger (22) are details of many thousands of wills from all over Devon, arranged alphabetically by surname in fifty typescript volumes. These volumes were scanned for references to Plymouth, Stonehouse or the parish of Stoke Damerel (as they generally predate Dock). Only ten of the abstracts or attached inventories contain references to books, although it is possible that the original inventories might have contained references which were not included in the abstract, for example when a simple total value was placed on all the goods in the inventory. The ten references which have been retrieved are all seventeenth-century. In 1601 the inventory of Edward Baker, apothecary, included "certain fisich books in the shop 16s.", which probably refers to his working collection (23). The gentleman and physician John Nicholls of East Stonehouse, 1625, had a collection of about 600 volumes which he directed to be divided between his five grandchildren (24); this suggests that his library was a general one rather than primarily a professional medical collection. Another physician, John Peryham of Plymouth, made his bequest in 1637 as follows:

> "To my eldest son Richard Peryam, clothes, phisicke books and other books being in number about 232 great and small with the three tables of anatomie,...." (25)

The inventory estimated the value of these books to be £30, averaging about 30d. each.

The last two wills described above definitely refer to a quantity of books which can be recognised as private libraries, and this is not surprising for professional men. At a more humble level, even a single work can be a prized possession worth separate itemisation in a will; such a bequest was that of Mary Morgan of Plymouth who bequeathed her *Bible* to Walter Morgan in 1650 (26). Eight years earlier, the inventory of another Plymouth widow, Mary Tucker, showed her to possess three bibles and other books which were valued together at £1. 3s. 4. (27). Clergymen might be expected to have comparatively large private libraries, and in the case of Samuel Austin of Stonehouse (28) more than one third of the total value of the inventory made in 1671 was comprised "in books £25. 13. 6"; he bequeathed to his daughter a copy of Christopher

Lowe's *Sermons*, but unlike the other professional men made no specific bequest of his library - perhaps he had no son to follow in his profession. Another clergyman, Nathan Jacobs of Plymouth, left his books in 1689 to his nephew "... if he be educated to the ministry ...." (29). The physician Richard Inglett of Plymouth made his books his first consideration in his will:

> "To my son Theodore all my books except my little bible and concordances." (30)

The collection was probably comparatively small, with the books in his study being valued at £10, which, if taken at the average value of Peryham's books, suggests about 80 volumes. The last will in this group is that of Nicholas Sherwill, gentleman and member of a prominent family of Plymouth merchants; in 1696 the books in his study were valued at £30, which suggests a collection of about 200 - 250 volumes.

In the wills described above there is direct evidence of the presence of some book collections in the Three Towns, mostly at Plymouth but with two references from Stonehouse and none from Stoke Damerel . In most cases where the collection was evidently sizeable, the testator was a member of the medical profession, a clergyman or a teacher, and they seem to share a general concern that their books, which had probably been gathered together with some difficulty, should pass to the son or nephew expected to follow in the testator's profession. There are indications that these private libraries, for it seems fair to term them as such, also contained general works such as might be expected in an educated man's library, and all probably had the number of "English divinity books" mentioned or hinted at in some of them.

For every will examined and found to contain references to books, another twenty or more were found not to contain any references; but it would not be quite fair to conclude that only about 5% of these testators possessed books. Frequently wills contain the phrases such as "goods and chattels", "personalty", "residue of my estate", etc.and these could have included books which the testator had not seen fit to bequeath separately and specifically. Nevertheless there are two strong indications that the ownership of books was not widespread amongst those who made wills, and they are derived from the two extremes of possessions. People who had comparatively little to bequeath, of whom there were increasing numbers in the seventeenth-century (such as widows and small tradesmen whose estate might be valued at £10 or less)

normally detailed all of their property. Sometimes the items were split into single units, such as one bolster, one sheet, one spoon, and they included itemised wearing apparel; people who were concerned with the small detail of their property in this way were most unlikely to have omitted any reference to a book of any description in their possession. At the other extreme, an indication arises from the disposal of property by the well-to-do; inevitably it is a materialistic disposal. For these people, the customary first bequest was a charitable one, in the form of money or endowments for the housing and maintenance of the sick and poor, such as the almshouses built by the Fownes merchants (31), and the support of the Hospital of Poor's Portion. In the sixteenth-century there were many bequests to the White Friars, the Grey Friars, and the Magdalen, for the poor and sick. Nothing comes through in terms of the edification of the general public apart from the one reference to a book to be chained in St. Andrew's church. If there had been any form of municipal or other endowed library it seems reasonable to suppose that some reference would have been made among the hundreds of local wills examined.

From the second half of the seventeenth-century some evidence about the availability of books can be found in the works published by local authors. Some of their writings, such as the simple piestic prose and poems of the nonconformist minister Abraham Cheare, rely on the *Bible* and quote no other traceable sources; but other authors, such as John Gilbert, Vicar of St. Andrew's, had no hesitation in proving his points by reference to a variety of books. One of his published sermons (32), preached on 30 January 1698/9, contains a preface in which he defended King Charles the Martyr; in this, he quotes from over thirty works, in English, Latin and Greek, on politics, history, biography law and general prose writings. Gilbert was a Canon of Exeter, and his sermon was printed at Exeter, so it is possible that he consulted some of his references there, perhaps in the Cathedral Library; but it seems likely from his evident familiarity with his texts that he had copies in his own possession. Similarly, the published works of the wellknown Plymouth physician John Huxham (1692-1768) are studded with innumerable quotations. One of these works, *Observationes de aere et morbis epidemicus, 1739*, contains specific marginal references to: classical authors such as Aristotle, Caesar, Cicero, Horace, Ovid and Seneca, and the ancient medical works of Hippocrates and Celsus; to medieval medical

worksof Galen and Bacon; and recent medical authorities of the new schools of thought such as Cheyne, Hoffman, Mead, Sydenham, and his own teacher Herman Boerhaave. All of these works were essential in the education and training of physicians of the period, first the classics in which to gain the mastery of the Latin language which was the language of medicine at that time, then the standard works of Hippocrates and Galen who were still much respected although new knowledge was being developed, and finally the recent publications required by a physician in order to keep up-to-date. It is unthinkable that Huxham would not have possessed these items in his professional library for immediate reference.

In the case of another Plymouth medical man, James Yonge, born in 1641, there is not only the evidence of his professional publications but the first-hand account contained in his *Journal* (33). His attitude to books and experiences in obtaining them must have been paralleled by many young professional men from the area, and will be quoted in some detail. At the age of nine Yonge could read and write well and had learned the elements of Latin at the Grammar School. His father then apprenticed him to a naval surgeon, and he spent much time at sea during the next five years; his master then retired, and Yonge, still penniless, was bound apprentice to his own father. On completion of his apprenticeship he went to sea again as a surgeon; by this time, although he was so poor that he "had not the common necessaries that every sailor had", he did possess a few books, probably of anatomy and surgery for that was the province of a surgeon and he refers occasionally to "looking over my books" in connection with interesting cases he met. He managed to save his precious books when captured and imprisoned in Rotterdam but they were later confiscated in prison. On returning to England he had to start again, and managed to acquire a few books before sailing for Newfoundland as surgeon on a fishing vessel. There, "having now more leisure ... and better stockt with books, ... I applied myself to study". On returning home he set up practice and began to achieve some reputation for a few spectacular cures. He married, and through his wife's family obtained a lucrative post of naval surgeon at Plymouth, so that from 1673 his financial problems were resolved and he could afford the books he needed for his profession and also in support of his deep interest in the new developments in science generally. He became acquainted with Robert Hooke of the Royal Society and other members. On a visit to London

during which he renewed these acquaintances, he also records an episode of book-buying:

> "My business being done, I went about and bought books, medicines, goods, clothes, etc., for myself and friends, laying out for others £175." (34)

The commissioning of friends on visits to London was probably common practice, and it seems likely that it was only by such visits to London that a professional man could acquire his specialised texts (vid. inf. Chapter 9). Yonge had evidently been able to acquire a considerable collection, for when a Plymouth doctor disputed one of Yonge's cures by saying that wounds of the brain were incurable,

> "I challenged him to a meeting at the coffee house where I undertook to prove by at least 60 authors (half of which he never heard of) that wounds of the brain were curable." (35)

Yonge was as good as his word; he produced the books, and then published the details of the case. He was held in high esteem at the Royal Society and the Royal College of Physicians and met many eminent prople through his membership of these organisations. Sometimes this led to donations to his private library, such as Clarendon's *History of the Rebellion* which was presented by the author's son. Sometimes he took the opportunity to consult books owned by his friends or patients

> "Dr. Collins ... advised me to consult his book. I told him I met it at Mr. Elliot's while I attended him at his house, and had bestowed time on it, and next opportunity would do more." (36)

On many occasions his journal reveals an acquaintance with a range of subjects and authors, as do his publications; for example, the classics, medical works, associated science, botany, chemistry, poetry, astrology and astronomy, history, voyages, biography, law, etc.

Not every professional man had the wealth which Yonge managed to acquire to built up his library. Amongst the methods practised were copying passages of importance, borrowing from friends, and buying secondhand books or even libraries. The *Plymouth weekly journal* for the week 9 - 16 March 1722 carried an advertisement of a book auction at Plymouth:

> "A collection of valuable books in Divinity, History and other parts of learning, will be sold by auction, on Monday the 19th. of March next, at Four a Clock in the evening, at Mrs Armitage's Coffee house in Plymouth."

So far, most of the private libraries found at Plymouth have been primarily the libraries of professional men such as James Yonge.

What about general family libraries? When did they become common among the middle classes? Here an interesting phenomenon emerges. It was in the late sixteenth and seventeenth-centuries that the fortunes of many local families were made through trade and commerce, and the wealth was gradually invested in land and houses, providing accumulated wealth which was handed down from one generation to another. It was in the late seventeenth and eighteenth-centuries that the revival of learning brought about a fashion for private gentlemen's libraries and the acquisition of books and the building of library rooms in private houses. This period coincided in the area of the Three Towns, especially in Plymouth, with rapid expansion in the population. The middleclass houses which were on the outskirts of the old town were gradually engulfed in the expanding urban areas, and the general result was that important local families simply acquired land much further away from the towns and built their new residences there. In them they often established their family libraries, but the history of these libraries falls properly in the history of libraries of the counties and outside the geographical limits set for this study. One particular example, however, might be useful. The Woollcombe family acquired as its family residence the Hemerdon estate, some miles from Plymouth, and built their country house which contained a large library room. In this room there now exists a family library of some 3,000 volumes of general literature which has been built up since about 1680 by the individual tastes of each generation; classics, literature including many early novels, plays, poetry, natural history, local history, English history, naval and military history, general biography, heraldry, general science, music - these are all well represented in the family library which represents some three hundred years of family history.

Around the area, too, and not properly a part of this study, were the houses of local nobility, in which libraries existed. Richard Carew of Anthony was an ardent bibliophile, but the Anthony House library is not yet available for historical examination. The Parkers built Saltram House, and the library of this family which became the Earls of Morley contains some 5,000 volumes representing the building up of a gentleman's library of the eighteenth-century. Mount Edgcumbe House, the seat of the Earls of Mount Edgcumbe since about 1550 had a fine library which was destroyed by fire. The consequence of these early moves into the surrounding countryside by first the nobility and then

many of the middle-class families , was that the Three Towns were never the homes of private libraries on a scale worth special study. The professional men had their private libraries for professional reasons basically and added other material according to their means and inclinations. Other people acquired a few books, perhaps for education or pleasure. In 1845 an eminent local scholar was able to write that:

> " ... with the exception of Mr. Howard's library at Hartley, since the dispersal of Mr. Murray's library, we possess very few private collections of value either in the town or neighbourhood." (37)

Mr. Howard was an expert on Persian poetry and a local schoolmaster; no other reference has been found either to his library or that of Mr. Murray, and, with the exception of the Cottonian Library which was imported into the area and will be described in Chapter 4 with its host library, the history of local private libraries virtually ends at this point. It is now necessary to go back in time again and look at other types of library to be found in the Three Towns before the mid eighteenth-century.

3.4 Endowed libraries.

In the two centuries following the Reformation in England a large number of small libraries were established, often little known individually, and not easy to bring into a framework for study. The most successful attempt to view these libraries as a whole has been made by Dr. Thomas Kelly, who recognised that the basic characteristic common to the libraries was that they were "created (and sometimes maintained), by the gift of an individual or individuals" (38), hence the generic name "endowed" libraries. These libraries can be sub-divided by the nature of the controlling authority; they could be parochial, municipal, scholastic or independent. Some were even a combination of sub-types, such as municipal and parochial at the same time. These were the first modern public libraries, although their stock was heavily theological, often much in Latin, Greek or Hebrew, and the books were at first normally for reference only and difficult of access, chained or locked in bookchests etc. The content of the library was the choice of the donor, and usually no money was provided to maintain the library, which is why so many soon declined. Kelly has identified two main periods in the history of this type of library

movement; first, from the Reformation to about 1680, the time of the early spread of endowed libraries, in which about one quarter were founded; and secondly, after 1680, the later endowed libraries, in which the main formation took place between 1680 and 1720, declining thereafter, and becoming insignificant by about 1770 as the new subscription libraries rose to overshadow them. The earlier period generally saw the main establishment of endowed libraries in towns, the later period a spread into the rural areas. It was in the peak period around 1700 that Dr. Thomas Bray was promoting the systematic provision of parochial libraries in rural areas, and encouraging the foundation of lending libraries in deaneries.

How did the general development and spread of endowed libraries affect the far Southwest, and the Three Towns in particular? In broad terms, the examples of endowed libraries which are often quoted come from any part of England except the Southwest, except the municipal library at Bristol, which, as had been shown in the last chapter, was at too great a distance to be seriously considered as being in the region of the Three Towns. Examples of endowed libraries are known from Devon and Cornwall, particularly through the work of the Central Council for the care of Churches (39). The author has examined the records deposited with the Central Council, and the Cornwall and Devon Record Offices, and has constructed the distribution shown in Figure 9 on the basis of these findings; although these findings are not claimed to be complete (for much research needs to be carried out into the two counties), they do demonstrate that Devon and Cornwall contained several libraries of the endowed type; and it seems reasonable to expect that Plymouth, at least, will have had one or more establishments of that kind because it was a large populous area with at least some inhabitants sufficiently wealthy to provide a library if they had the inclination to do so. A search has revealed three possible candidates, associated respectively with St. Andrew's Church, the Corporation Grammar School, and Dr. Thomas Bray.

3.4.1 Books in St. Andrew's Church.

In 1598 Martin Whyte bequeathed "one book of martyrs" to the Churchwardens of the town of Plymouth; the only church at that date was St. Andrew's Church. Whyte's instructions were that the book should be "bound with boards to remain within the parish church chained in some

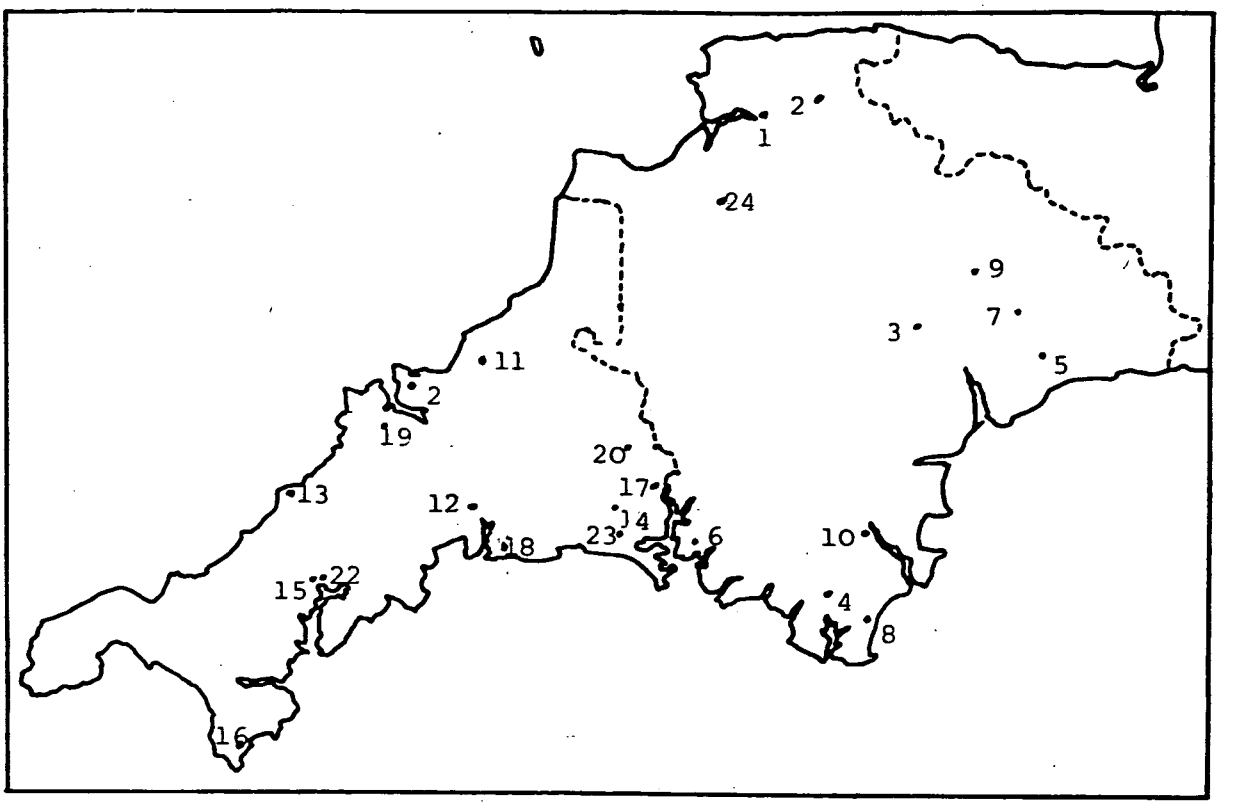


Fig. 9 Endowed libraries in Devon and Cornwall

1. Barnstaple
2. Bratton Fleming
3. Crediton
4. Kingsbridge
5. Ottery St. Mary
6. Plymouth
7. Plymtree
8. Slapton
9. Tiverton
10. Totnes
11. Lanteglos-by-Camelford
12. Lostwithiel
13. Newquay
14. Tideford
15. Kenwyn
16. Landewednack
17. Landulph
18. Lansallo
19. Little Petherick
20. St. Dominick
21. St. Enodoc
22. Truro
23. St. Germans
24. Torrington

Items 1 - 14 are described in the CENTRAL COUNCIL FOR THE CARE OF CHURCHES *Parochial libraries of the Church of England*. 1959. Items 15 - 22 are based on manuscript notes by M. Hands, 1950, deposited at the Central Council for the Care of Churches.

place" (40). It is not known why Martin Whyte, the merchant, should have made this bequest, but possibly he was inspired by similar examples elsewhere which he might have seen on his travels, or simply wished to add to the chained *Bible* which should have been in the church in conformity to the various injunctions of the sixteenth-century which enabled anyone who could read to have access to the *Bible*. Yet, Whyte's direction that the book should be "chained in some place" does not sound as though any other works were already available, for if there had been, a more natural instruction would surely have been to add the volume to that collection in a specified place. Perhaps Whyte's was the first volume. A list of church goods in 1635 (41) shows that the books then consisted of:

> "Imprimis. One fayre Bible of the largest volume
> Item. Two bookes of Common Prayer of the largest volume
> Item. Two books of Martyrs, the one in English and the other in French
> Item. One book, called Jewell's Works
> Item. One book of Homilyes."

An eyewitness account of the later days of the tiny public access collection is provided by John Harris, who wrote in 1806:

> "In the Chancel close by the east door there was on Shelf ... Fox's Acts et Monuments of the Christian Church (the folio Edition in Black letter two large volumes in their place) the second volume in which there was a number of Plates which was torn out by the Boys and there were always indiscriminately driven from them then to the grief of the young Student more especially as the original copies were very scarce and it being quite unpolite for the elder branches of society to be seen lounging over these old fashioned Books - so they were very little used they been removed 15 or more years why I do not know or where and nothing placed in their room." (42)

Probably the volumes had been removed by the Churchwardens into safer custody. The Churchwardens' Accounts survive from 1780, and open with a list of church goods including "One Book of Homilies, Three Books of Martyrs", in addition to the sets of service books for common use. These were repeated in the inventories until 1818, after which only the church plate was listed, and a pencil note of later date simply added that "Books for the Mayor & Aldermen etc. not brought forward" (43). The Church of St. Andrews does still possess some old archives, which are not available for inspection, so it is possible that more light might be shed upon this minute parochial library at some future date.

The parish of Charles Church was created in 1661, but no

trace has been found of a library there, unless one reference in the Churchwardens' Accounts of 1724 to the purchase of two books is interpreted in a library context. It seems more likely, however, that the expenditure should be interpeted in terms of service books, which were purchased from time to time (44).

3.4.2 The Library of the Plymouth Corporation Grammar School.

The Grammar School was founded by the Corporation by public subscription in 1561, and for many years it was housed in an almshouse chapel, with rooms for the master over it. The curriculum was a classical education, as already described by the schoolmaster William Kempe in 1588, in his treatise on education (vid. sup. p. 73). Clearly there must have been some textbooks available for the pupils' use, as they were required to become fluent in Latin, and have some knowledge of Greek and Hebrew, which required considerable practice in reading and translating these languages, and a familiarity at least with the common classical authors such as Caesar, Livy, Tacitus, etc. Schools such as those at Guildford and Shrewsbury had begun to acquire libraries by 1600, but at Plymouth there was no library for the first century of the school's history. In about 1658 the school moved to a newly built schoolhouse in the Hospital of Orphans' Aid, and it was soon after this, in 1669, that the library was founded through the bequest of Justinian Peard, a former mayor of Plymouth and a man who had shown interest in the Grammar School in his lifetime. His bequest was:

> "To the Free School in Plymouth Ten Pounds to buy bookes for the use of poore boyes and to remain in the said School to begin a Library." (45)

The sum of ten pounds would have been sufficient to buy perhaps a hundred volumes or more if it was expended on school texts, but nothing is known of either the way the bequest was carried into effect or of the history of the library for another two hundred years. In about 1863 a local historian noted that:

> "A small library is attached to the school. It is now, however, used as headquarters for the Volunteer Rifles, the School having, to the shame of the Corporation, been permitted to be removed to a private dwelling house." (46)

The reference seems to imply a library room of some sort rather than a collection of books, and this might prove important in connection with the interpretation of Bray's account which follows in the next

subsection, for the building which the School had just vacated and to which the small library was attached was the schoolhouse in the Hospital of Orphan's Aid, where the library of 1659 would have been established. The official historian of the Plymouth Corporation Grammar School, C.W. Bracken, believed that the school library probably continued from 1659 and for most of the school's later history, although he found no evidence to support this, and was unable to find any books which might have survived from the school library (47)

3.4.3 Dr. Bray and libraries at Plymouth.

The most famous founder of endowed libraries was Dr. Thomas Bray, who was particularly concerned with founding libraries for the clergy in England and Wales and in Maryland U.S.A. (48). His earliest effort was a scheme for a lending library in every deanery, and between 1695 and 1699 he gave grants of £1 - £10 towards the establishment of thirty six lending libraries in Montgomeryshire and sixteen English counties (49). In December 1699 Bray set off on a missionary journey to Maryland, but he left with the intention of furthering his lending library scheme at the ports en route, for he was already particularly aware of the potential value of libraries at seaports. The manuscripts and publications relevant to the Plymouth episode are not readily accessible in this country, and these sources will therefore be quoted fully, commencing with a description of Bray's attitude to this matter of libraries at seaports.

> "He had observed long before this, that the Missionaries were often detained several weeks, and sometimes months, in our sea-ports, before they could go off, more especially in time of war, when not only the want of wind, but of convoys, occasioned such stay. And he had often reflected upon it, as of consequence to them, to have a library in each of the sea-ports where they usually embark, in which they might study during their stay on shore; and this, not only that they might lose no time toward their better improvement, but to prevent also the expence and scandal to which they might be exposed, by sauntering away whole hours together in coffee-houses, or perhaps less sober places. But could they have a library in each of those ports to be in all the time they would spare from their meals, and where they might recreate themselves, after hard study, with the conversation of their brethren, whether fellow missionaries, or the sea-chaplains, or other ingenious passengers in port; and were the use of those libraries strictly enjoined them at their departure; he presumed, scarcely any thing would contribute more to the

> advantage and reputation of our missions and missionaries: the ports being generally very loose places, and dangerous for young men to abide in long; and where, without employment and a suitable retirement, they will be much exposed to such temptations as will stain their characters. Upon which consideration, and presuming withal, that, if the foundation of such sea-port libraries were once laid but by a few books, it would be no great difficulty to obtain considerable additions from the benefactions of the sea-officers, who are usually generous enough, as well as from other gentlemen, if the clergy in such places would be zealous and active in promoting the design; he formed proper proposals for the raising such libraries, obtained some benefactions toward making a beginning, and took along with him some books to deposit for that purpose in each port as should happen in his way, ..." (50)

Armed with this intention and some supplies of books, Bray set off for Maryland. His ship called at Gravesend and Deal, at each of which he left a box of books to start a library, together with copies of the rules and regulations he had had printed for their use. On 24 December 1699 he reached Plymouth, where the ship stayed until 4 January. During the Christmas festivities he met local clergy, gentry and civic dignitaries, to whom he submitted his scheme for founding a library. First he contacted the ministers of the two Plymouth parishes, and on 26 December went with them

> "... into the Library about 4 in the afternoon, which we found in a very indifferent condition being filled with empty casks and wood, tho' it has some excellent books in it, as the Polyglot, the Criticks at Large, Pools Synopsis etc. but scarce known to be there; very likely, because covered with dust and overwhelmed with rubbish." (51)

Bray persuaded the two clergymen that the Library should be cleaned and that subscriptions should be raised to enlarge it. He took advantage of the Christmas social gatherings to recommend his plan, "which seemed to be very much favoured by all that were spoke to concerning it" (52). On 28 December he preached at St. Andrews Church and dined with the Mayor, Mr. Opie:

> "To whom having represented the sorry Condition of the Library and also the Reputation it would be to the Corporation, as well as the advantage of the Neighbouring Clergy, the Naval Chaplains, and Officers on board the Men-of-War (of which there were alwaies several Riding in that Noble Harbour), the Gentry of the Place and of the Country adjoining, to have a Library at so considerable a Port as Plymouth, well furnished with the Choicest Books not only in Divinity but History; of Voyages also and in all the faculties, the Mayor, Mr. Opey, a very civil person, seemed very zealous to promote the Design; and promisd in order thereunto, to visit the Library, and to cause it to be cleand, whited, and set in good order; and invited me to Dine with him on Wednesday following." (53)

At this second meeting the Mayor again expressed "a great deal of zeal to promote the Library" (54), and Bray left with him a form for subscriptions to enlarge the Library. Evidently he felt that the printed form which he had used at Gravesend and Deal was not entirely suitable for the larger port, for he replaced it by a more suitably worded manuscript document which read as follows:

> "We whose names are hereunto subscribed being sensible that a Library well Stockd with Choice Books, of like nature with those we understand are advancing in the several Deaneries, and Market Towns of this Kingdom, for the Use of any of the Clergy who shall think fit to borrow such Books out of the same, as they shall have occasion to peruse would be of Singular Use in this Port, as for the Clergy, and other Gentlemen in this Town and Neighbourhood, so for the Entertainment of such Missionaries as being outward Bound are detained here by Contrary winds, and for the Benefit of the Naval Officers and Chaplains of Ships which Ride in our Harbour; to the end we may promote and Encourage so good a work, we do unanimously agree to Contribute the several and respective Suns unto our several names annexed, to be disposed for the erecting a Library of that kind at Plymouth, to the purposes aforesaid." (55)

Unfortunately, despite the enthusiasm which Bray evidently believed to exist, very little seems to have happened to the Library at Plymouth after he had set sail on 4 January 1700. Canon John Gilbert, vicar of St. Andrews Church, was one of the clergymen Bray had met during his visit, and he was shortly afterwards in correspondence with the newly founded Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. From Gilbert's letter of 23 April 1700 it emerges that Bray left £5 to the Library at Plymouth, that the Mayor had also subscribed £5, and that "farther subscriptions are in agitation ..." (56) One week later he wrote that he had not received "the printed papers nor any books" (57). The next reference seems to be one year later, when in a letter dated 5 April 1701 Gilbert wrote that

> " ... all he can do, is to take off some of the Societies small Books. That he gave £5 to a Library which Dr. Bray raised at Plymouth, but that nothing more has been done therein, not even by Mr. Martin the Minister who promised £2 to the same." (58)

The evident lack of interest in the Library, which must have sunk back into its former neglected condition, is quite consistent with the general impression of the attitude towards books which comes through the evidence of wills of the period. No later evidence of this Library has come to light.

One of the most interesting aspects of this Bray episode is the fact that a library of some sort did already exist, and had evidently been in existence for several years as it had become neglected and virtually forgotten. What was the origin of this collection? It is theoretically possible that it was an old municipal endowed library such as those which existed at Bristol and Norwich, or a parochial library despite the lack of supporting evidence. It could even have been an independent library, although the lack of reference to any individual's name and the lack of other local records would seem to make this unlikely. The author believes that the most likely explanation is that the neglected Library discovered by Bray and the clergy was the school library established by Peard's will in 1669, and there is some circumstantial evidence to support this interpretation. The School was located in the Orphans' Aid building close to St. Andrew's Church, and a nineteenth-century source (59) has already been quoted which mentioned a small library attached to the school, the most natural interpretation of the word "library" in this context being that of accommodation rather than books. This could fit Bray's description, which had implied a small room which had become a kind of store room for unwanted "empty casks and wood". A period of thirty years would have elapsed between Peard's bequest and the time of Bray's visit, which is plenty of time for a small collection of books to be generally forgotten and neglected, particularly if, as seems likely, no-one else followed Peard's example and no new books were added to the Library. Another piece of circumstantial evidence which points to the neglected collection of books having been of comparatively recent foundation comes from the actual works specified by Bray, for he mentioned three by name. "Pools Synopsis" can hardly have been any work other than Matthew Poole's *Synopsis Criticorum aliorumque S. Scripturae interpretum*, which was first published in London, 1669 - 1675 (60). "The Polyglot" is likely to have been Walton's *Polyglot Bible*, published 1654 - 1657, while "the Criticks at Large" can almost certainly be identified with Pearson's *Critici sacra*, a work which was published in 1660 and appears in many libraries of the endowed type (61). These three works would seem compatible with the date of Peard's benefaction, and their contents would not conflict with that identification, for the languages and literature of theology was very much the concern of seventeenth-century schools as well as classical literature (62), and in any case the works could have been selected with a view to use by the masters as much as, if

not more than the boys. A third piece of circumstantial evidence about the nature of the library comes from the account of Bray's meeting with the Mayor of Plymouth; the Mayor promised to have the room cleaned up and put in order, which strongly suggests that he intended to use his powers as Mayor to do so. The School was a Corporation responsibility, and the Mayor could intervene directly. If the Library was under church jurisdiction, the Mayor would probably have had to make a different promise - perhaps, to speak to the church authorities. If, as is now suggested, the old library is identified as that which was part of the School, and as the School was a municipally controlled establishment, it would already have been of a sufficiently public, albeit neglected, character to make it a suitable basis for the wider public access proposed by Dr. Bray. The neglect prior to 1700 could readily be explained by the change in schoolmasters from the able Nicholas Conduit of Peard's time to the quiet unassuming John Bedford who was an adequate schoolmaster but not a noted academic; after all, the School had functioned successfully for its first hundred years without a library and not every schoolmaster would encourage its active use! Works such as the ones identified were likely to have been of little interest to anyone outside the school and the local clergy, who must already have had their own private libraries (vid. sup. p. 103 re Gilbert).

Unfortunately it seems unlikely that anything new will be found about this mysterious library; but at least the existing evidence does prove that some kind of quasi-public library existed in Plymouth at least a few years before 1700.

CHAPTER FOUR. SUBSCRIPTION LIBRARIES.

Eighteenth-century library history is dominated by the different types of subscription library which spread rapidly, while the endowed libraries had achieved the main period of their establishment by about 1720 and had begun to decline (1). Subscription libraries had in common the fact that the costs were met by the subscriptions of users; they differed from the endowed libraries in that they had a regular income for their maintenance and development, and the contents of the libraries were governed by the tastes of the readers themselves, who actually controlled those subscription libraries which were established on a non-commercial basis. They were the first libraries to provide a widespread general and popular service. As Irwin has pointed out:

> "Until the eighteenth century, all the English institutional libraries, whether at the universities, at the newly founded schools, at the cathedrals and at the many parish churches where small libraries were established, were in effect part of the ecclesiastical machinery. ... Apart from the British Museum and the scientific libraries, the first non-sectarian collections were those of the eighteenth century; ..." (2)

although he is careful to add that many of the proprietary libraries owed their existence to Anglican or Nonconformist inspiration. The growth of the subscription library movement has its roots in the changes which were taking place in the economic and social life of the country. The Agricultural and Industrial Revolutions were bringing about urbanisation, the spread of industry and the growth of factory systems. On the one hand there was the prosperous middle class which included not only the more traditional professional men and landed gentry, but the nouveau riche who had made fortunes from the economic developments, and the employer class of merchants, shopkeepers, and so on. On the other hand there were the working classes of dispossessed farm labourers and widespread cheap labour brought about by industrialisation. The subscription libraries were mainly the province of the middle classes, for it was in general not until the nineteenth-century that the working classes had the minimal literacy and time and means to read, as will be described in Chapter 6. Although there were exceptions, particularly in Scotland, it was mainly the middle class which in the eighteenth-century possessed the ability, need and desire to read. It was an educated class, with the professional classes usually having undergone a classical education and attended Oxford or Cambridge universities.

Others had perhaps received a classical education, but at least some English education, for a basic literacy was essential in the mercantile class. Wealth brought both the money and the leisure to read, and this reading habit was common among the women as well as the men, for the ladies could afford to employ cheap labour as servants and have leisure for themselves. In the towns the senior servants were also required to read and write in order to discharge their responsibilities, and the tradesmen required literacy in their business dealings. There was therefore a wide spread of literacy within the middle class and even touching the upper strata of the working classes.

The establishment of libraries was encouraged further by a number of factors. The Licensing Act which had originally been designed to provide strong state censorship of the press was allowed to lapse in 1695, with the result that printing sprang up rapidly in the provinces. In 1709 the Copyright Act put the author in a bargaining position with publishers and a literary career become more feasible to those lacking private means; but the move away from private patronage made it necessary for writers to study the public taste in order to have a market for their works. Literary men such as Samuel Johnson and Alexander Pope were able to make a living from their literary income. There was, too, the rise of newspapers and the periodical press, although the stamp tax made newspapers expensive. Literary magazines such as *Tatler (1709), Spectator (1711), Gentleman's magazine, Rambler, Idler,* etc. appeared. The stable two party political system of Whigs and Tories led to considerable political pamphleteering on issues such as the slave trade. These publications were both expensive and difficult to circulate widely, and the number of purchasers was not large. Much of their successful circulation was achieved through the coffee houses, which had begun to be social centres where gentry and tradesmen met to hear the news and discuss current issues, from which informed public taste and opinion became evident. Coffee houses often provided the latest newspapers, periodicals, and perhaps pamphlets or even books for the interest of their patrons. These facilities were for the gentlemen, but the rising tide of literature soon established a new genre from about 1740 which had particular appeal to the ladies who wished to be amused rather than instructed in their reading; the novels of Richardson, Fielding, Smollett and many others found a ready, even voracious market for their works. The increasing demand for literature for education and for recreation

was hampered by the technical methods of book production, with small editions, high prices, and the difficulty of individuals obtaining the works they wished to read. It was a natural solution that the concept should arise of collective forms of satisfying these individual desires to read, and the subscription libraries were the result.

Within the subscription library group a number of different types can be distinguished by means of certain characteristics. Contemporary proper names of libraries can be misleading as libraries with the same titles, such as "Public library", "Circulating library", "Library society", were not necessarily alike in their organisation and administration. Kelly and Kaufman have carried out the main studies on subscription libraries, which Kaufman calls "community libraries" (3), to which references will be made, but Kelly has suggested useful definitions for the sub-groups of subscription libraries and these have been used as the basis for organising the main sections of this chapter (4), viz.:

1. Commercial subscription libraries, often referred to as "circulating libraries", in which literature is hired out for profit.
2. Book clubs, which Kelly defines as "non-proprietary subscription libraries in which the books were disposed of when they had been read, so that no substantial permanent library was accumulated." Kelly considers as a secondary criterion the presenceof a strong social element, with regular meetings for convivial purposes as well as for the distribution of books, (Kaufman considers the latter the primary criterion). One of the usual contemporary names for a book club was "reading society." There were clubs which specialised in a particular form of literature other than books - pamphlets, magazines and newspapers - but shared the same arrangements as the clubs which confined themselves mainly to books.
3. Private subscription libraries, which aimed at a permanent collection. The proprietary libraries were joint stock enterprises in which each user purchased a marketable share in the property and in addition paid an annual subscription. Non-proprietary libraries relied on annual subscriptions, although an entrance fee might also be demanded without conferring ownership rights.

It must, however, be recognised that the above classification is a convenient framework only, and that a particular library might not always fit exactly into one of the sub-types because some characteristics might vary in detail. There is also the frequent problem that many libraries, particularly the book clubs and commercial subscription libraries, have left sparse evidence of their existence. Many were shortlived, and are known only from occasional references in directories, newspaper advertisements, and similar sources from which it is not always possible to determine the characteristics possessed by the library and to assign it into the appropriate subgroup; contemporary names can be misleading. This problem occasionally arises in the following sections on the Three Towns' subscription libraries, but in most cases the context has made it possible to assign the libraries into the broad sub-groups with a reasonable degree of confidence.

4.1 COMMERCIAL SUBSCRIPTION LIBRARIES

Commercial subscription libraries, or circulating libraries, were conducted for profit, and arose out of the booktrade. The idea of hiring out books was an old one, for the medieval stationers used to hire out manuscripts; but no continuity seems traceable between the medieval custom and the re-emergence of the idea in seventeenth century London. Kelly describes (5) how Francis Kirkman in 1661 was advertising his stock of histories, romances or poetry "to be sold or read for reasonable considerations", and Widow Page in 1674 advertised "all sorts of histories to buy or let out to read by the week". These were the earliest known modern examples of commercial book hire, and it is evident from the wording that works were borrowed from the bookseller's normal stock, not from a separate library stock. In the early eighteenth century Benjamin Franklin arranged to borrow books on reasonable terms from Wilcox of Little Britain, because "circulating libraries were not then in use". (6) Another form of book hire was operated in some coffee houses:

> "The scandalous and low custom that has lately prevailed amongst those who keep coffee houses, of buying ONE of any new book so soon as it is published, and lending it by turns to such gentlemen to read as frequent their coffee house". (7)

It is not surprising to find that the high book prices and problems of obtaining copies from small editions inspired the idea of turning the situation to commercial advantage with the establishment of libraries from which literature could be hired by subscription. Traditionally, Alan Ramsey of Edinburgh is credited with establishing the first circulating library in about 1725 (8), but it probably originated independently in other places also. The movement spread rapidly. By 1730 circulating libraries were established in the fashionable spas and resorts, particularly on the doorstep of the Westcountry at Bath and Bristol; by 1800 they were said to be everywhere. Hamlyn estimated about 1,000 of them by 1800 and quotes an 1804 source that "every intelligent village throughout the nation now possesses its circulating library"(9). They ranged from large libraries containing a general stock of light novels through to serious nonfiction, to small libraries run as sidelines to other businesses such as millinery, tea, perfume, in which the main content of the libraries was light fiction. William Lane the publisher who owned the Minerva Press, renowned for its production of novels, was deeply involved in the circulating library business. Not

only did he open a large circulating library in London with branches in the provinces, but by 1787 he was selling complete circulating libraries suitable for small shops; these complete libraries were supplied with printed catalogues and were available at one week's notice. This made it easy for provincial purchasers who might have difficulty in building up a stock through the local booktrade. The range and quality of the services of circulating libraries was dependent upon the amount of the subscription, the size of the library's stock, and the local method of administration - some were open access, others depended upon choice from the catalogues. Loan periods varied. Distance was not a barrier to would-be readers, for delivery services were often available, at least from the larger libraries.

Circulating libraries are particularly associated with the novel, a form of literature which began about 1740 and flourished with the growing appetite of the middle classes for light literature; and the frivolity of using circulating libraries is usually attributed mainly to ladies, although Kaufman has shown that these are unjust caricatures of the situation (10). There were circulating libraries which provided a balanced collection of quality literature and works on a wide range of subjects, but the best of these were usually the largest establishments such as Mudies. Mudies Select Library was established as a latecomer in the history of circulating libraries, in 1842, achieving branches all over London, branches in Birmingham and Manchester, and services throughout the United Kingdom; his business provided a vast outlet for the booktrade, purchasing nearly one million volumes in the decade 1853-1862 alone, of which about 50% consisted of novels, and the rest mainly history, biography, travel, etc. (11). W. H. Smith began his chain of railway bookstalls in 1848, and within a few years established circulating libraries from them throughout the railway network (12). The increasingly literate working classes were able to make use of these libraries. The demise of many circulating libraries came about at the end of the nineteenth-century with the cessation of the threedecker novel which had been such a profitable business (13), but circulating libraries did survive into the twentieth-century; examples were the chain libraries established by Boots the Chemists, in connection with their shops, the Times Book Club established in 1905, and, at the other extreme from these select libraries which catered mainly for those who did not wish to use the rate-supported public library or wanted new publications, there was

the sensational fiction of cheap "twopenny libraries". Although the heyday of circulating libraries was the eighteenth-century with substantial continuation into the nineteenth-century, the final decline of the movement did not take place until the post-1945 period, long after the terminal date in this study.

Early circulating libraries were flourishing by 1730 on the very doorstep of the Westcountry, being at Bath and Bristol in 1728 (14, 15). This was a considerable distance from Devon and Cornwall, where there seems to be comparatively little evidence to show the extent of circulating libraries before about 1800. Varma's list (16) contains only one entry for pre-1800 Devon (D. Murch of Barnstaple 1763-95) and none for Cornwall. Indeed, the booktrade itself had developed comparatively late in Cornwall, and in the early years was dependent upon a few stationers who set themselves up at the ports through which books were brought from London and elsewhere (17). This is probably the reason why Polwhele describes circulating libraries in Cornwall as almost non-existent or very little regarded; the book club was the preferred institution (18); Vibert's circulating library at Penzance and others are of later foundation (19). In Devon the earliest named circulating library appears to be the Barnstaple reference already noted, but Exeter almost certainly would have provided an environment in which the libraries could have flourished at an early date. In 1802 Robert Southey in the guise of Don Manuel Alvarez Espriella wrote:

> "In most of the English towns they have what they call circulating libraries; the subscriber, for an annual or quarterly payment, have two or more volumes at a time, according to the terms; .... There are several of these in Exeter, one of which, I was told, was considered as remarkably good, the bookseller himself a man of considerable learning and ability". (20)

This bookseller has been identified by Whitton (21) as Gilbert Dyer, who occupied premises opposite the Guildhall and, according to Whitton, was active from 1788 to 1820. The identification seems acceptable, but if it was indeed Dyer it is now possible to extend his activities back to at least 1784, for in that year the Exeter Library Society moved its stock into the premises of Mr. Dyer (22); the implications are that he was already established at that address, probably as a bookseller, and was possibly already operating a circulating library. It seems likely that an in-depth research project into the two counties of Devon and Cornwall might reveal earlier libraries than the ones quoted here, and the

regional context of the circulating libraries of the Three Towns might be revealed more fully. At the present stage of knowledge, it appears likely that the earliest circulating libraries were introduced into the eastern part of Devon, the Exeter area in particular and occasional other centres such as Barnstaple, with limited development in Cornwall where the slow development of the booktrade probably influenced their establishment. The Three Towns seem likely to have emerged with circulating libraries comparatively early in the region of Devon and Cornwall, where they provided the greatest population centre and an obvious market, but perhaps rather later than much of the rest of the country in accordance with the evidence, which goes back no further than 1792. This is a reference in a guidebook to Dock (Devonport), which states:

> "There are several Circulating Libraries, each of which contains many hundreds of volumes of entertaining and instructive books ..." (23)

The earliest reference at Plymouth seems to be 1809 (vid. inf.) and at Stonehouse as late as 1821. This does not, however, prove that libraries did not exist before then, and there is a strong probability that others existed before these dates; the accounts in the following pages represent the minimum provision, known because it has been recorded in surviving publications and manuscripts. It seems likely that earlier evidence could have been swept away in the Blitz of 1941 which destroyed much archive material and local early newspapers; the subject of circulating libraries is unfortunately not one into which pre-war local historians researched and published their findings. Nevertheless a considerable number of references to circulating libraries have been found, and will be presented for each town in turn, starting with the oldest town, Plymouth.

4.1.1 The circulating libraries of Plymouth

The evidence for bookselling in Plymouth goes back to at least the middle of the seventeenth-century, and it would be strange if the Plymouth booksellers did not make the innovation of circulating libraries as soon as they were seen to be a lucrative business elsewhere. One might expect a considerable potential market for light reading among the households of the merchants and professional men who formed a wealthy middle class in the town; as well as genteel tradesfolk

such as the numerous mantua-makers and milliners. The earliest reference which has been found, however, is as late as 1809, in the form of an advertisement by G. ROGERS, bookseller, who was terminating his Library.

> "G. ROGERS ... begs leave to acquaint ... that ... he has declined the Reading Room and Circulating Library, and intends very shortly to sell by auction his excellent well chosen books. Subscribers, etc. having books in their possession, will please to return them immediately." (24)

It seems likely that G. Rogers was George Rogers who was described as a stationer in 1799 (25), so it is conceivable that his library might have been in operation for many years before its closure in 1809. In early 1812 a guidebook was published which noted:

> "There are likewise several circulating libraries, for the purpose of disseminating the most pernicious sentiments amongst the shop girls of milliners and mantua makers in the shape of novels and romances." (26)

One of them was probably MRS BROWNE's which was operating in Frankfort Place in 1812 (27). The proprietress was Box-Keeper of the Theatre Royal, and the Library was next door to the box lobby, a convenient and promising location in which it still existed in 1814 (28). In 1814 F. BARNIKEL, stationer and bookseller in Market St., had a circulating library (29) which continued until about 1820 when it changed hands to become BULLEY'S Circulating Library (30). Bulley's is recorded in Whimple St. in 1830 (31), High St. in 1836 (32) and later in Union St. (33), where the library continued to operate under the same name until at least 1873 when the last reference occurs (34).

In 1821 there were at least four recognised circulating libraries in the town (35). One belonged to ROWE's, the publishers, who operated a reading room in Whimple St., ("... in connection with a circulating library of standard and popular works in the various departments of literature." (36) The subscription to the Library and Reading Room was 1 gn. per annum. There was also HAVILAND's Reading Room and Library in Old Town St., which according to an 1822 source was called Haviland's Literary Circulating Library (37). The third library was MRS. JENKINS's library "of popular productions" in Whimple St.; but in 1822 her business had been taken over by Eliz. GLANVILLE, a stationer (38). It is possible that this was the business referred to as Glanville's Circulating Library in Buckwell St. in 1828 (39); in 1830 Elizabeth Glanville's Library was in Frankfort St. (40). The fourth library listed

in 1821 was the one belonging to Edward HANCOCK in Pike St., which is not referred to after 1822 (41).

The reputation of circulating libraries was generally low, and in 1825 Samuel Rowe, the publisher and owner of a library, found it necessary to defend the reputation of the Plymouth circulating libraries:

> "Plymouth is supplied with several establishments of this kind, to some of which the reflection which is cast upon circulating libraries in general, will by no means apply - as they contain collections of standard and useful publications as well as works which only profess to amuse the readers." (42)

He meant his own library, of course! Sanford's guidebook of 1828 casts a little more light on these libraries and their source of supply:

> "There are also several circulating libraries, and the number of booksellers being considerable, most of them combine the trades of stationer, printer, bookbinder, musicseller, medicine vendor, perfumer, etc. Their shops, however, are tolerably well stocked with books, and they have a constant supply of new and standard works from London." (43)

Many of the libraries appear to have been shortlived, or at least occur in single references, over the next few years. In 1830 there was Robert BOND 's Library and Newsroom in Bedford St. (44), PALMER's Circulating Library in Old Town St. (45), and GRANVILLE's Circulating Library in Frankfort St (46). Thomas LEE's library was recorded in 1830 (47) and 1836 (48). Elizabeth LITTLE, bookseller and printer in East St., had a library in about 1844 (49). Amelia A. ARLISS, also a bookseller and printer, had a library and reading and newsrooms at 33 Bedford St. in 1836 (50) and 1844 (51), but by 1852 her premises had been taken over by Mr. Luke (52).

By the mid 1840s there were at least nine circulating libraries in Plymouth (53). One of the longer-lived libraries was that of Isaiah W. N. KEYS, who established himself in 1841 as a bookseller, "English and foreign", and by 1846 was advertising his extensive circulating library in Bedford St. at a subscription of 1 gn. per annum (54). In 1852 he advertised that his library held over 4,000 volumes which were "worthy of the support of the reading public"(55); the firm continued until 1877, although Mr. Keys died in 1872, and by

1880 the firm had been taken over by Bazley & Co. (56). Other libraries in the 1840s were: John TIDSDALE, bookseller at 3 Squire Terrace, Thomas JENKIN, bookseller, printer and bookbinder in Cornwall St., and William B. TRIGGS, bookseller, stationer and printer of George St. (57). By 1852 the business of John Tidsdale had been taken over by Edward ALBIN who, according to his advertisements, had established his business in 1838 (58) although it is not clear whether he was running a library as early as that. "Albin's Public Library" was certainly in existence in 1849 (59), and it was probably in early 1849 that he had taken over Tidsdale's premises, for on 20 March he advertised the opening of a newsroom and chess club at 3 Squire Terrace, Union St., thereafter referred to simply as Union St. (60). In 1852 Albin took a whole page advertisement in a local directory, in which he refers specifically to his function as a librarian as well as a printer:

> "As a librarian ... The Proprietor would remark, that he has lived in one of the largest and best libraries in England, where every possible advantage was ceded to the Subscribers, and the greatest satisfaction prevailed. In his Library, the same system is aimed at; and, from the constantly increasing patronage and support, it is hoped, with some degree of success." (61)

The name of the library in which he gained this experience has not come to light, and despite his boasted "degree of success" he is not included in the next directories, although in 1862 he was still listed at 3 Squire Terrace, as a bookseller and stationer, who was also a librarian, so it sounds as though the relative importance of the circulating library might have declined (62).

In 1845 a mystery occurs. One of Plymouth's prominent lecturers was Alfred Rooker, who in 1845 gave a lecture on the literature and literary men of Plymouth; he was asked to publish it, and in the published version he added a note:

> "Since this lecture was written a plan has been proposed and cordially adopted, for the establishment of a Library in Plymouth, which, from its terms of admission, shall be accessible to everyone. A hundred subscribers have been already obtained." (63)

The fact that it was apparently to be available to anyone who could afford the subscription seems to point to a commercial venture rather than a private subscription library in which membership was normally by suitability and election, and the ability to pay. From the timing, it seems just possible that Rooker had in mind Albin's new premises in Union St., and certainly the intention expressed by Rooker is

not dissimilar to the intention described in Albin's advertisement quoted above. There is, however, another possible library which Rooker might have meant, but it is one which does not fit neatly into any of the types of subscription library, being something of a mixture of characteristics. That library was the PLYMOUTH ECONOMIC LIBRARY, which was formally established in May 1845 (64) and fits the date most closely. The earliest description seems to be in 1846:

> "This thriving little society has lately made several important additions to its small, but well-assorted stock. Amongst others we can mention, as having been ordered at a late meeting of the committee, Mrs. Ellis's Works; Roscoe's Works; Michelet's Works; Maxwell's Works; Scenes on the Shores of the Atlantic; Eastern Europe and Emperor Nicholas; Age of Pitt and Fox; Jameson's Characteristics of Women; and Mahon's Life of Condé.
>
> We feel assured that were it more generally known that such works as these, - as well as a choice of from more than three hundred others, ... - may be had at the low yearly subscription of ten shillings, or at three shillings and sixpence per quarter, the society would boast of a much greater number of subscribers. The value of the Society may be said to have been already sufficiently proved. It has provided a stock of reading of the very best quality to more than a hundred subscribers, at a low rate of subscription, ... without running the society into debt; and it already possesses a decent stock for the future, which cannot but increase with every successive year." (65)

It seems from this first description to be a small private subscription library but one in which the membership regulations were perhaps not as strict as most; however, in 1849 the Library was associated in some way with the "English and foreign" bookseller, G.H. Lidstone, a major bookseller in the area. In a large advertisement he included details not only of his new bookstock, but also of the Plymouth Reading Society, Plymouth Economic Library and Church of England Book Society. The Plymouth Economic Library is described as having over 500 volumes of the best publications in history, biography, voyages, travel and belles lettres, which were "inaccessible to the middle class of the Town" until the establishment of this "Club" (66). The Library still existed in 1850, when the Committee issued a new catalogue " ... and have taken other steps to increase its already numerous classes on the extende patronage of the public." (67). During this time no separate reference had been made to any separate library belonging to R. Lidstone; but in 1862 LIDSTONE's was listed for the only time as a circulating library (68), and only the bookselling business is mentioned therafter; no later references occur to the Plymouth Reading Society or the Plymouth

Economic Library. From this evidence it is not easy to determine the category into which the Plymouth Economic Library falls; it had a committee and was referred to as a society or club, but unlike bookclubs it set out to build up a stock and there is no evidence of the social activity usually associated with bookclubs. Admission seems to be unrestricted - or, perhaps, unrestricted in comparison with the exclusive Plymouth Proprietary Library. It was located on bookshop premises, but this would not have been unusual; but the prominence given to Lidstone, and the eventual omission of anything but his circulating library at the same address, does suggest that the Plymouth Economic Library could have been a special variant of a circulating library initiated and supported by Lidstone. It would not seem bad publicity to organise a subscription society which would effectively consist of anyone who could afford the subscription and was interested in the select nature of the subject coverage. It would attract the clientele that Lidstone sought for his bookshop, and would have involved him only in the provision of a small space for the library collection.

The other libraries to be described seem with little doubt to belong to the profit making circulating libraries. Felix NICHOLSON operated a "select" library at 16 Bedford St. in about 1844 (69); his stock was taken over by J. V. LUXMOORE of 12 Bedford Way in about 1846 (70). The circulating libraries of R. B. BUTLAND of Buckwell St. (1d. per volume) and Alfred DAVIS of Union St. (10s. per annum) appear only in 1857 (71). JAMES & JAMES, booksellers and stationers in George St., are listed as librarians between 1864 and 1869 (72). G. FLINTOFF lists himself as a librarian in his directory published about 1844, but the advertisement relates to his newsroom and gives no details of the circulating library (73). HEYDON, a major bookseller and printer, appears in a classified list of 1844 as a librarian, but in no other listings (74).

The general impression given by the apparently rapid turn over of businesses and the short-term references to libraries belonging to firms of booksellers and printers is that the libraries were no longer necessary to provide a sideline supporting a business which consisted of several elements of the booktrade generally. The expansion of the population and commercial interests in the town seem to have begun to provide a market which could increasingly support

specialisation as a bookseller or a printer etc., or at least a reduction in the number of elements in the business. During the period 1820 to 1860 the library facilities of Plymouth had increased to provide a substantial private subscription library, a scientific library, the Mechanics' Institute Library, and numerous small institutional and bookclub facilities. From about 1860 the number of circulating libraries tends to settle into a pattern of a comparatively small number of large and long-lived libraries.

William H. LUKE was a printer and bookseller who had served his apprenticeship with the important local firm of Nettleton, and he was destined in later years to become one of the early members of the Free Public Library Committee. He took over the premises of Amelia A. Arliss by 1852 (vid. sup.) but there is no evidence that he took over her library stock although that was possible. He also took over the premises of Felix Nicholson (vid. sup.) and it was at the latter's address, 16 Bedford St., that Luke's Circulating Library was in operation in 1867 (75). Books could be borrowed for the low subscription of ½ gn. per annum, or could be rented by the single volume for an unspecified charge (76). This library continued to operate in Bedford St. for many years, passing on the death of W.H. Luke in 1894 to C. Luke who retained the business until about 1906 (77), after which only the printworks was continued for a year or two before moving to Palace St. (78).

BAZLEY & CO. had taken over the premises of Keys' Circulating Library by 1880 and appears in the classified section of directories under the heading "Libraries, circulating" until 1899 (79); however the entry in the alphabetical commercial sections and street sections continue to describe the firm as Booksellers, printers, and many other activities down to the end of each entry, where the words "circulating library" appear until the 1913-4 edition. This suggests that the circulating library interest of the firm was gradually allowed to decline from about 1900 onwards.

BOWERING & CO., stationers in George St., was operating a circulating library by 1869 (80), and is of particular interest because from at least 1875 it was also advertising a Children's Library(81).

The last reference to the Children's Library seems to be 1889 (82), by which time the public libraries of Plymouth and Devonport had collections of juvenile literature in their Lending Libraries, and Plymouth had commenced a School Library Service; possibly these free services affected the subscription Children's Library. Bowering also operated its "Devon and Cornwall Library" from 10s.6d. per annum (83) but no further details of this have been found. Bowerings disappeared from the directories for 1905-6, but re-appeared in 1906-7 when it was advertised as being in connection with Mudies (84).

H.P. SAWDAY specialised in the hire of music from his shop in George St. from at least 1880 (85) to 1885 (86), after which it was continued at the same address by the firm of TURNER & PHILLIPS from at least 1888 (87) to 1914 (88).

One library which received scant entry in the Plymouth directories of the late nineteenth-century was the Railway Library run from W. H. Smith's bookstall at Plymouth Station. Despite the lack of local detail, it can reasonably be supposed that this library conformed with the other railway libraries set up by the same firm. In 1860 W.H. Smith opened his RAILWAY CIRCULATING LIBRARY, consisting of one large central library which supplied fresh stock to the branches of his chain of 185 railway bookstalls. The Plymouth branch had been established by 1867 (89) and possibly even earlier, so it was probably operating the standard subscription rates laid down in 1861, viz.:

no. of vols. at a time	6 months	12 months
1	12s. 6d.	£1. 1s. 0d.
2	£1. 0 . 0d.	£1.11s. 6d.
3	£1. 7s. 0d.	£2. 2s. 0d.
6	£2. 2s. 0d.	£3. 3s. 0d.
12	£3. 3s. 0d.	£5. 5s. 0d.

The subscription rate for one volume at a time is similar to the prices of other circulating libraries, but the cost of borrowing several volumes at a time is similar to the subscription charges of the private subscription libraries, but with the advantage of no conditions except the ability to pay. The stock consisted of the typical range of the quality circulating libraries, with popular biography, travel, fiction, poetry, science, theology, magazines

and reviews. By 1895 Smith's Library had about 12,000 titles and about 300,000 volumes, so the stock was likely to be fresher and with a wider choice than any provided by small independent libraries. (90).

A few other libraries made their appearance in Plymouth about the turn of the century, although not well documented. The name NANCARROW appeared first as a stationer in 1885 at Townsend Hill, the expanding end of the town. From 1888 (91) to 1898 (92) he appeared in the classified lists of librarians, after which the business was recorded only as stationers. F. COCKLE, a bookseller in Union St., also had a library from 1899 (93) to at least 1904-5 (94), moving from Union St. in about 1907 and reappearing as "bookseller and lending library" at 22 Ebrington St. from about 1908 (95). UNDERHILLS, a long established firm of stationers and printers, offered weekly terms of 2d. per volume "to accommodate visitors" in 1900 (96). The firm DOIDGE in Union St. was primarily a bookseller and stationer, but is recorded from 1901 to 1905-6 (97) as having a circulating library. The large retail store, POPHAM, RADFORD & CO. (98) offered customers a library service from about 1909 which was connected with the Times Book Club, and continued many years thereafter. Although the chain of chemist shops run by Boots were operating Boots Booklovers' Libraries in their shops soon after 1900, the first entry for a Boots' branch in Plymouth does not occur until long after the terminal date of this study, 1914.

The lack of survival of catalogues and detailed descriptions of the circulating libraries of Plymouth has made it impossible to evaluate the range and depth of their stocks and services, but it has appeared from the numbers and patterns of their establishment as though the history of this type of library in Plymouth has broadly followed the national pattern, although the initial establishment might have been comparatively late.

4.1.2 The circulating libraries of Devonport

Although settlement had begun to develop at Dock soon after the establishment of the Dockyard in 1690, it was not until the late eighteenth century that the problems of access, water supply, and other matters had been solved sufficiently to permit the rapid growth of a populous area in which libraries might be established. The commercial and professional services of the town had begun to expand in 1780 (vid. Chapter 2.3) and it was probably in the next decade that circulating libraries were introduced. The earliest guidebook was published in 1792, by which date:

> "There are several Circulating Libraries, each of which contains many hundreds of volumes of entertaining and instructive books; which are constantly accumulating by the accession of various new publications." (99)

Twelve years later an old inhabitant of Dock was quoted as saying:

> " ... several circulating libraries have been opened, to the support of which the fair sex chiefly contribute." (100)

A few years later, in 1812, a local guidebook asserted that:

> "Of these (circulating libraries) there are but few in Dock, nor are the volumes of which they are composed either very select or novel." (101)

Both of the latter observations suggest that light fiction was the main staple of the libraries, althoughthe 1812 author went on to point out that as an extensive "Public Library" had been established at Plymouth (Plymouth Proprietary Library) and there were several reading circles in Dock, the need for more circulating libraries was to some extent superceded (102). Probably that was just wishful thinking. Circulating libraries continued at Devonport, and Hunt quoted in 1901 from an unspecified local directory "of about 1820" which showed that there were then several circulating libraries in existence, which:

> "... severally invite the admirers of Literature, Music, and the Fine Arts, as well as the student, the novelist, and the politician." (103)

This, however, is not to be interpreted as a change in the scope of the stock of the circulating libraries, but rather as the prejudices held by the respective authors, for on the subject of circulating libraries there was a tendency to express extreme opinions - either one was *for* them or *against* them, and the authors of favourable comments in respect of the Three Towns were inevitably the owners of such libraries and the publishers of the respective directories.

The earliest individual library which has been identified was the one belonging to HOXLAND, publisher of the 1792 guidebook which referred to the existence of several circulating libraries, but which described only one - his own! Hoxland's Library was next door to the busy Fountain Tavern, and was available at subscription rates of 4s. per quarter, 7s. per half year, or 12s. per year. Non-subscribers could borrow at the cost of 2d. each for pocket volumes and "octavos and large volumes in proportion." (104) Hoxland also supplied newspapers and periodicals, which later became a newsroom service. Gradually partners entered the firm; Hoxland, Cross & Colman in 1814; Hoxland & Colman by 1821. Hoxland & Colman were printers, stationers, and the proprietors of the *Plymouth & Dock weekly journal*; this important firm operated one of the principal libraries and reading rooms in Dock in their Fore St. premises in 1821 (105). By 1828 the firm had become simply Colman's, stationer, but the Library in Fore St. was still one of the principal circulating libraries in 1830 (106); there is no reference to it in the mid 1840s directories, but there is one further reference to it in about 1863 (107).

SANDFORD's Circulating Library had been established by 1810, when an advertisement for Dock Theatre advertised that tickets could be had at Mr. Sandford's Circulating Library in St. Aubyn St. (108). Mr. G. Sandford was the Manager of the Dock Theatre, the local agent for Bish's Lottery Office, and a stationer as well as library owner (109). He moved from Dock to take over the running of Plymouth Theatre, and by 1822 the library had become MRS. SANDFORD's; she also combined the activities of stationer, tea-dealer, and agent to the London Wine Company (110). Mrs. Sandford's Library was listed as one of the principal circulating libraries in 1830 (111), but it had disappeared from the directories by the mid 1840s.

Another early library was COHEN's in Ker St., mentioned only in 1814 (112). HARRIS's library was in Duke St. in 1814 (115) but had moved at a later date to George St. where Henry Thomas Harris's Library was noted as one of the principal libraries of Devonport in 1830 (114). The other principal libraries at that date were Colman's, already mentioned, Byer's and Saunders's (115). BYER'S Library in Fore St. is referred to in 1828 and 1830 as having " ... an extensive stock of popular books" (116) - a piece of self advertisement for the guidebook was

published by Byer! SAUNDERS' library was of a totally different kind from the literary circulating libraries, for it was Saunders' Repository for Artists, specialising in artists' materials, and advertising in 1828 that it held "prints, paintings and drawings lent to copy" (117). John CONGDON's Circulating Library in Fore St. was listed in 1821 (118) and 1822 (119), and seems to have been distinct from the firm of Congdon & Hearle who were booksellers, stationers, printers, and owners of the *Plymouth & Dock telegraph and chronicle*. Another library seems to have belonged to Mr. T. R. BATTEN, for although he is not among the names listed in directories, an advertisement in the local press in 1840 offered for sale the circulating library of the late Mr. T.R. Batten; it consisted of about 500 volumes of "modern and well selected novels", which could be viewed at 100 Fore St. (apparently his premises); the list of subscribers and readers would, it said, be handed over with the Library (120).

If the scraps of information which have survived are taken at face value, they suggest that there was a sharp decline in the circulating libraries of Devonport in the late 1830s and early 1840s. This could easily be the case, for the period coincides with a serious decline in Dockyard employment and many people moved away from the town, so that the retail trades and services to the community must have suffered loss, and the non-essential items such as library subscriptions are likely to have been amongst the most affected. There was also the competition of other libraries for those who could afford the subscriptions; the Mechanics' Institute had a comparatively large collection of general literature, and there was also the Devonport Civil and Military Library.

Only a few commercial circulating libraries are recorded in Devonport after 1850. In 1852 there were John LEWIS's in Cumberland St., Roger LIDSTONE's (also of Plymouth) in Fore St., and George Wills HEARLE's also in Fore St. (121). The latter might possibly have carried a more specialised stock, for his main business was that of "naval military and commercial stationer" (122). In 1862 HEYDON's and HEARLE's were listed as the main circulating libraries, located in Fore St. (123), although Heydon's seems more likely to have been a newsroom than a library (vid. inf.). There is then a gap, until the end of the century, when the firm of A. & H. SWISS, naval and military stationers and booksellers, had a library from about 1895 to 1904 (124).

4.1.3 The circulating libraries of Stonehouse

The history of circulating libraries in Stonehouse can be related quite briefly, for there is little evidence. Yet Stonehouse in the late eighteenth and early nineteen-century must have provided an environoment very suited to circulating libraries. It had a rapidly growing middleclass population of officers and government officials and their families, and had a flourishing social life at the turn of the century. The number of ladies and literate senior servants in this residential area would seem to have provided a ready-made clientele for at least entertaining literature. Perhaps this was so, but the earliest positive record of a circulating library at Stonehouse is quite late, in 1821. However, although there were few libraries recorded at Stonehouse, the ones which have been discovered seem to exhibit a marked tendency to be longer-lived than those of Plymouth and Devonport, with the exception of the first to be described, MILLMAN's. Millman's, in Chapel St., was referred to only in 1821 (125); but it seems possible that he was the J. Millman listed as a bookbinder in Chapel St. in 1814 (126) and the library might therefore be a few years older than the directory date. A John Millman, aged 36 years, was buried in October 1820 (127), and this might provide a clue as to why no further references occur to a circulating library of that name.

HUSS's Library, also in Chapel St., was in existence by 1821 (128) and continued for at least another twenty years. The Huss family was prominent in Stonehouse, and were stationers in Chapel St. in 1812 and probably long before then (129). In 1824 the owner died (130) and there is some contradiction in the directory evidence of what happened next although the business remained in the family. An 1828 directory refers to the circulating library of Mr. Huss (131), another of the same year to Mrs. Huss (132), 1830 Messrs. Huss & Field (133), and by 1843 the library belonged to Mrs. Huss (134) who retained the stationer business until at least 1852 and the library until at least 1850 (135).

George NEWCOMBE was a bookseller and printer in Edgcumbe St., first mentioned in about 1825 as the owner of the only other circulating library to be mentioned besides Huss's (136). By 1830 he had expanded the business to a Reading Room and Circulating Library, the terms of which are shown in the advertisement, Fig. 10 , of that date (137). By

News-Room,

AND

CIRCULATING LIBRARY,

EDGCUMBE - STREET,

Stonehouse.

G. NEWCOMBE,

Begs respectfully to inform the public that in addition to the *London* and *Provincial Newspapers*, he takes in "*The New Monthly*" and "*London Magazine*;" "*Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*;" "*The United Service Journal* and *Naval and Military Magazine*;" "*The Monthly Magazine*;" "*The London University Magazine*;" and "*The Oriental Quarterly Review*;" which, after lying a month on the table for the use of the Subscribers to the News-room, are lent to non-subscribers at a penny or halfpenny per day, according to the date of the number.

Subscribers to the News-room are entitled to take Books from the Library without any additional Subscription.

Terms

TO THE LIBRARY AND NEWS-ROOM.

	To the Library only. £ s. d.	*To the News-Room.* £ s. d.
Per Year	0 16 0	1 1 0
Half Year	0 9 0	0 11 6
Quarter	0 5 0	0 7 0
Month	0 2 0	0 3 0
Week	0 0 6	0 1 0

☞ *Subscriptions to be paid in advance.*

PRINTING AND BOOKBINDING
In all their various Branches.

LONDON PERIODICALS SUPPLIED.

Fig. 10 G. Newcombe's News-room and Circulating Library. Advertisement from BRINDLEY's *Directory 1830*.

1837 Newcombe's premises, and probably his business, had been taken over by Edward William COLE, who apparently continued a circulating library as one of his enterprises until at least 1857 (138). He was also a printer, bookseller, stationer and music seller, and it was his firm which received contracts and orders for the supply of books, periodicals and binding for the Medical Library at the Royal Naval Hospital (vid. Chapter 9.4). John BARTLETT of Union St. was a bookseller and stationer who was also recorded as a librarian, viz. owned a circulating library, from at least 1862 (139) to 1873 (140).

The lack of references to circulating libraries at Stonehouse in the latter half of the nineteenth century is interesting. It could mean that they did not exist, apart from the couple mentioned above which operated for a few years only. Stonehouse lacked the different types of alternative library provision which were available in Plymouth and Devonport; it had no private subscription library, its mechanics' institute was short-lived, and it did not achieve any rate-supported public library services until after 1914. Consequently it seems rather strange that the apparent library vacuum was not taken up by circulating libraries. It is possible that the changing social background can account for this. Stonehouse was becoming overcrowded by the expanding working classes and the standards of housing and social amenities were appalling; the section of the general public in Stonehouse which formerly had the desire, means and facilities in which to read for recreation was no longer prominent. It seems likely that those who wished to use circulating libraries in the latter part of the nineteenth century would have taken advantage of the easy communications to use the large libraries which continued to exist in Plymouth catering for the needs of those who wished to read recent light literature without using the public libraries.

4.1.4 Commercial subscription newsrooms in the Three Towns

Although libraries are the primary focus of this study, early newsrooms performed an important function which was later taken over by the rate-supported public libraries. In the Three Towns there was a particularly concentrated need for access to the most up-to-date information which could be obtained from the newspapers and

other ephemera to be found in newsrooms. There were the constant comings and goings of troop movements, of naval ships, and of merchant ships; the very livelihood of a large proportion of the inhabitants of the Three Towns was bound up with such events. Newsrooms were sometimes attached to circulating libraries, like Newcombe's at Stonehouse. Others were established as separate enterprises. In one sense they can be seen as the forerunners of modern special libraries and commercial departments in large public libraries, for they filled the same type of need although in a much less sophisticated way. The organisation about to be described was important to the Three Towns and is included at this point because it seems to have been established on a commercial basis and to have admitted anyone who could pay the subscription, although there are some characteristics which make its exact classification doubtful.

The PLYMOUTH DEVONPORT AND STONEHOUSE COMMERCIAL ROOMS appear to have been an ambitious venture in providing cheap access to the leading London and provincial press. Their foundation is largely attributed to "John Johnson Esq. of Plymouth" (141). The main newsroom was in Plymouth, on the ground floor of the Freemasons' Hall (Fig. 11) at the east end of Cornwall Street, conveniently next to the Market Gates. The building was opened by the freemasons in 1828, but it was not until 1832 that the Commercial Rooms were established (142). These rooms were supported by "very numerous subscribers" at the rate of 1 gn. per annum for each member, except in the case of firms, for which the subscription was 1½ gn. for two partners, 2 gns. for three partners, and so on. For this modest subscription they had access to "all the leading London and Provincial papers with certain select periodicals" and the newsroom was open for extensive hours, Mondays to Fridays 7 a.m. to 10 p.m., Saturdays 7 a.m. to 11 p.m., and Sundays 8 p.m. to 10 p.m. (143). The facilities were available to "strangers" (not resident within fifteen miles radius) upon the introduction of a subscriber and the registration of the user's name and address, after which he could use the room for seven days with one further permitted extension of seven days (144).

The Commercial Rooms had branches in Devonport and Stonehouse. The Devonport Commercial Rooms in Tavistock St. were described in 1837:

> "The Reading Room is very capacious, well lighted with gas, has good fires, and every convenience. The principal

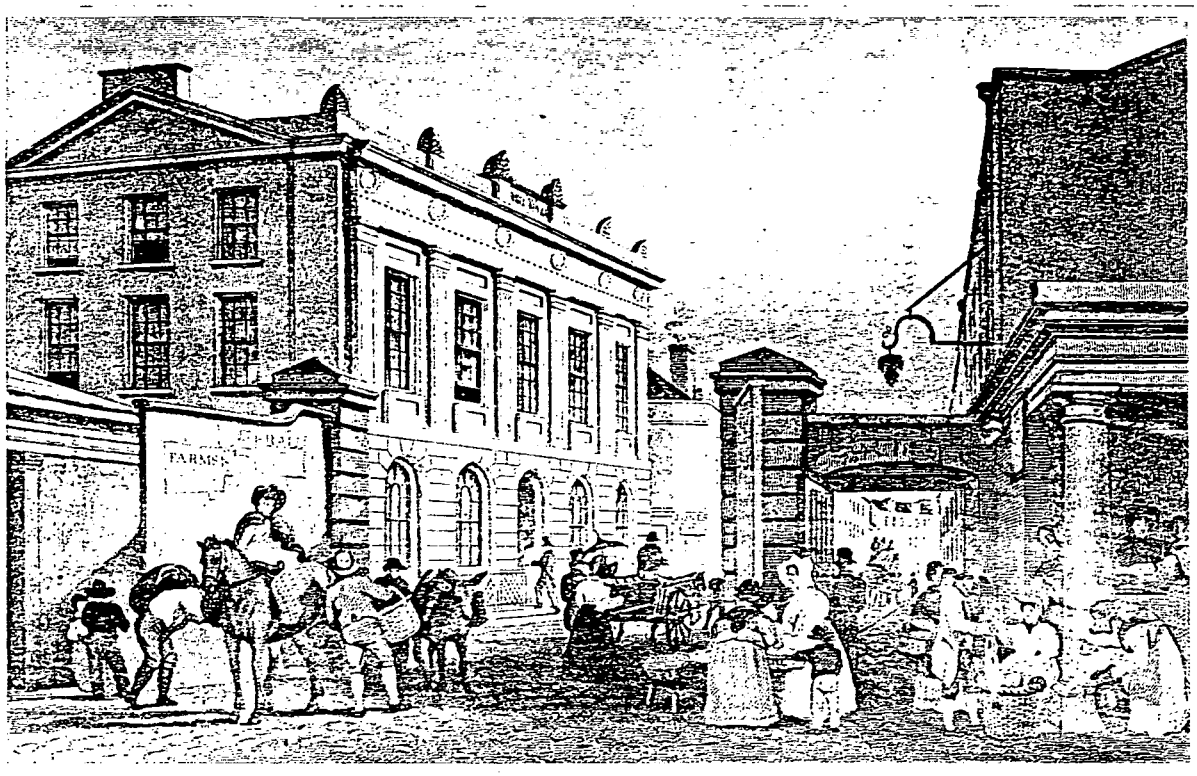


Fig. 11 The Commercial Rooms, Freemasons' Hall, Plymouth.

> London and Provincial Papers, Prices Current, Shipping Lists, Parliamentary Papers, etc. are constantly to be found on the tables." (145)

The subscription was quoted as 1 gn. per annum, but although the Plymouth charge for partners of firms was not specified, it seems likely that charges were uniform across all of the branches. It is not clear what happened to cause the arrangements to founder, but within only a year or two the Devonport Commercial Rooms were broken up, and were replaced by a similar but smaller establishment in Fore St. run by Heydon the bookseller (146).

The Stonehouse branch of the Commercial Rooms was in Edgcumbe St., in 1837 at the house of Mr. Cole who also operated the circulating library already mentioned (147). This branch seems to have foundered like the Devonport branch, probably because neither Devonport or Stonehouse had the large commercial population of Plymouth to provide the financial backing.

The Plymouth Commercial Rooms continued to operate for at least thirty years. In 1844 John Wreford (Wreyford?) was recorded as its "conductor" (148), although the precise nature of this office is not clear. In 1853 there was a newspaper reference to the annual meeting of the Plymouth Commercial Newsrooms in the "Society's" rooms in Cornwall St., and there is reference to a Committee, which suggests that it was perhaps more akin to a private newspaper club, but can also be understood in a commercial profit context. The reference describes the newsroom as being supplied with six London daily papers, several London weekly papers, numerous local papers, periodicals and "other standard works" (149). In 1862 the names of members of the company running the newsrooms are given, and the attendant is named as Mrs. Wreyford, who was probably the wife of the "conductor" of 1844. This seems to be the earliest reference to a woman holding paid employment in an official capacity in a local library or newsroom (150). The Commercial Newsrooms were described as "well supported" in about 1863 (151), after which the records are silent. It is reasonable to suppose that in any case it would have been rendered superfluous from 1876 when the Plymouth Free Public Library began to make generous provision in its Newsroom for local and national newspapers and magazines and reference works in its Reference Library.

4.2 BOOK CLUBS

Bookclubs were groups of private individuals who clubbed together their subscriptions to purchase literature of common interest which they circulated throughout the group and then discarded. Often the clubs had a strong social element, frequently combining business with pleasure by dining together before their regular business meetings. The numbers of members were usually small, typically perhaps a dozen or twenty members, who held their meetings either in a convenient centre such as a coffee house or inn, or met in rotation at the homes of members. The bookclubs were cheap and easy to run because they did not require much space or a salaried librarian. Loan records could be minimal, perhaps nothing more than a regular circulation list attached to each item to be circulated. Clubs could be set up and disbanded very easily, and were of an ephemeral nature, often leaving little evidence from which they can be reconstructed.

Kelly has described the early history of the bookclubs (151). The earliest bookclubs seem to have been among the clergy of South Wales in the opening decade of the eighteenth-century, but few others are known before the mid-century and most of them were probably restricted to the clergy. The first secular bookclub is thought to have been founded at Leicester about 1740, and a few others were established in the Midlands before 1750. The number of clubs increased particularly after 1780, when contemporary political issues in America and France engendered a considerable number of periodicals and pamphlets, which often formed a significant part of the stock of the bookclubs. The clubs remained popular in the opening decades of the nineteenth-century. Kelly quotes a contemporary source in 1821 which estimated that there were about 600 bookclubs in the United Kingdom, plus some 750 magazine societies and many newspaper societies. Bookclubs had now reached their peak, and began to decline as competing facilities began to be established such as mechanics' institutes and other organisations concerned with providing reading material for the increasingly literate working classes. In reality, the bookclub principle was retained in the many societies which were formed under names such as mutual improvement societies, working men's clubs, which were established by and for the working classes as education spread downwards, and these latter developments will be

considered in Chapter 6.

Kaufman's census of pre-1800 bookclubs (152) shows that the earliest bookclubs seem generally to have been established in the Midlands and Northern England. Moving towards the Westcountry, the earliest of the Gloucestershire group of bookclubs existed from 1783, Bristol had a club in 1790, and Taunton had an early reading society in 1766. The bookclubs listed by Kaufman for Devon consists of the Exeter Reading Society 1792, Tiverton Reading Society 1795, and Powderham Literary Society 1796. In Cornwall, there was the Penzance Ladies' Book Club in 1770, Liskeard Reading Society 1791, and an undated reference to St. Ives Book Club. No doubt there were many others, for example Polwhele referred to "so many book-clubs being instituted in our different towns" in his *History of Cornwall* which he was compiling in the last decade of the eighteenth-century (153); but a preliminary search of the respective County Local History Libraries and the County Record Offices has yielded little except the Powder Literary Society, a Cornish ladies' bookclub which was established in 1791 and continued to at least 1799 (154). The great profusion in the two counties seems to have taken place in the early nineteenth century. Where did the Three Towns fit into the picture? They contained a sufficiently large population to permit the possibility of both general interest and special interest bookclubs, which lent themselves to the circulation of the current political news which was so important to this centre of naval, military and commercial traffic. The reliable evidence dates once again comes from the early nineteenth-century, but there are strong indications that in Plymouth at least there was some activity before 1800.

4.2.1 Bookclubs at Plymouth

The first glimpse of what might have been some form of literary society in Plymouth is recorded because of a ghost story connected with the group, which has otherwise sunk into oblivion. The ghost story itself was first recounted in the writings of John Fox who died in 1693, which means that the club was in existence in the late seventeenth-century. It appears that a group of people, including an admiral and a button-maker, met weekly at the "Bunch of Grapes" inn; the purpose of the meeting is not completely clear, although there seems no doubt that

at least part of it was a social gathering to dine together. A more specific construction on the club seems to have been given by Sir Walter Scott, who recounted the relevant story in his *Letters on demonology and witchcraft* (155) and introduced it as follows:

> "An apparition which took place at Plymouth is well known, but it has been differently related; and having some reason to think the following edition correct, ... you must pardon its insertion.
>
> A club of persons connected with science and literature was formed ..." (156)

It is not known why Scott had reason to think that the version he recounted was the correct one, or what grounds there were for asserting that the club was connected with science and literature. Perhaps this was a retrospective rationalisation, bearing in mind that such clubs had become very popular by the time Scott was writing. In any case there is no mention of the actual acquisition and circulation of literature which marked a bookclub; but the circumstances are sufficiently curious that they are worth noting as a possible early indication of literary interest in Plymouth.

A little more evidence is available about the next example of what might have been a proto-bookclub, which has the unlikely name THE OTTER CLUB; it existed from about 1740 to at least 1790, the period in which Plymouth's literary awakening was taking place and the town had influential men of ability such as the Mudge family and their visitors such as Dr. Samuel Johnson, Sir Joshua Reynolds, and his pupil Northcote, in connection with whom the Otter Club is mentioned. In 1762 Sir Joshua Reynolds visited Plymouth and brought with him his friend Dr. Samuel Johnson; they stayed at the home of Dr. John Mudge who was president of the Otter Club, and the reference to the club was recorded by Boswell. The unusual name of the Otter Club was derived from its origin when twelve young men, including John Mudge, bathed at the Hoe each morning, and dined together once a fortnight at the Pope's Head Tavern, a celebrated local inn. The evidence for the literary activity of the club is not clear, but Whitfeld wrote that:

> "Literary and artistic lions like Dr. Johnson and Sir Joshua Reynolds were welcomed .... Polemics and bantering personalities were banished from the club; the object was literary and scientific interchange, associated with the primary aim of good health, which gave rise to the origin of the institution." (157)

Worth, a usually reliable local historian, also attributed a literary function to the club (158), and it is quite possible that both writers

had access to some source which has not survived. The Otter Club continued to at least 1790, when it held a jubilee supper at its traditional meeting place, the Pope's Head Tavern, but it cannot be identified after that. Probably it lapsed on the death of its key figure, Dr. Mudge, early in 1793.

There must be some doubt about whether the Otter Club was a bookclub. It is not unusual for a group to be better known for its social activities rather than its serious purpose - for example, the general accounts of the Plymouth Medical Society, which is known to have the acquisition of literature as one of its main objects, concentrate on its function as a dining club and its sumptuous dinners (vid. inf.). If the Otter Club was founded with the objectives described by Whitfield, it was one of the earliest secular bookclubs to be formed. However, it seems much more plausible that a literary motive gradually crept into the club as its members grew in years, and it could have been confined to discussion rather than the collective pursuit of reading. Nevertheless, it would seem to have become a serious aspect of the club for it to have been of interest to Dr. Johnson. As the main figure of the club seems to have been Dr. John Mudge, Mudge biographies were consulted with little success, and the Will of John Mudge provides no real clue to his attitude to books, for the only mention of his personal library is an incidental one in which "all my plate china linen pictures books ..." (158) were left to his wife. The case must again be regretfully considered a doubtful one.

There is no doubt, however, about the book purchasing activities of the PLYMOUTH MEDICAL SOCIETY, which was founded in 1794. This seems to have started as a typical bookclub, with regular meetings which had a major social element as well as the business element. It is not clear from the evidence of the first few years whether it began with the intention of discarding material after all members had read it, but this seems to be the most likely interpretation. By 1800, however, it had definitely begun to accumulate a permanent collection of books which eventually became a library of over 2,500 volumes, and provided a general medical library function for Plymouth hospitals. For that reason, it is more convenient to describe the Plymouth Medical Society Library in Chapter 9; but the Society is important here in that it demonstrates definite bookclub characteristics in 1794, fifteen years

before the next reliable reference. The witness is Henry Woollcombe, who wrote in his diary , on an undated Saturday morning in October 1810:

> "On Tuesday last after dining with the members of an Book Club at the Pope's Head, ..." (159)

About a year later, when compiling his *Picture of Plymouth* he wrote:

> "Several societies of gentlemen, in which new and periodical publications are circulated, have long existed here: and of late years the medical gentlemen established a club, where books connected with the science of medicine only, are introduced." (160)

The latter reference is to the Plymouth Medical Society, and the implication from his statement is that bookclubs antedate it. In 1821 Rowe's guidebook mentions that "there were several reading societies" in the town, "formed among private gentlemen" (161), which he expands in the 1825 edition to read "several reading societies and bookclubs" (162). The only individual clubs from this period of which details are known are two which concentrated not on the circulation of books but on newspapers, periodicals and pamphlets, catering for the same kind of needs for which the commercial newsrooms described in the previous section were established.

The COFFEE ROOM adjoining the Guildhall in 1812 was described by Woollcombe as "but of recent establishment." (163) Members were elected by ballot, and paid two guineas per annum subscription. Most members were "mercantile men, and some professional ones" (164),and there was no obvious limit on the numbers. It contained London and provincial papers, charts, maps, and "other publications, which tend to elucidate and explain the occurrences of the day." (165) The EXCHANGE READING ROOM was evidently very similar; the Exchange had been built in Woolster St. in 1813, and the building contained from the beginning a reading room in addition to the offices of the Chamber of Commerce, marine insurance offices, steam packet company, and oil gas company (166). The reading room was described as:

> "... a commodious apartment, ... supplied with the daily and weekly journals of the country and metropolois, which are filed for the reference of the subscribers. The members are chosen by ballot, and pay an annual subscription of two guineas. Every member is permitted to introduce a stranger for one month ... The room is open from seven to nine in the summer, and from eight to nine during the winter." (167)

The reading room was managed by a committee, of which Richard Bayly was chairman in 1822 and John Smith was Treasurer; both of these gentlemen

apparently held the same offices in 1830 (168), and it is not clear whether they were elected annually or how the subscribers met to manage the business. Indeed, in the cases of both the Coffee Room and the Exchange Reading Room we are clearly dealing with hybrid organisations which do not show the full characteristics of bookclubs, but appear to be practical variants of the bookclub principle in that there was limited membership, by election, and no intention to build up a library - although back issues of newspapers were retained for a while at the Exchange. The large numbers of members made it impossible to emphasise the social gatherings enjoyed by smaller clubs, and once the club had been established satisfactorily it probably needed very little machinery for government and administration because of the continuity of requirement for the serials which were the main contents. The Exchange Reading Room continued to operate under the arrangements already described until at least 1843 (169), but by 1848 it had either lapsed completely and was being replaced, or it was reorganised, for a newspaper advertisement announced that:

> "The Plymouth Exchange Subscription Reading and News Room just established at the Exchange in Woolster St., were opened to the Association on Monday last." (170)

The new arrangements were successful, for at the end of the first year there were 144 members (171), and it was evidently governed by a committee for in 1862 the officers are listed as President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer; the attendant in that year, who must have had a number of predecessors, was J. Welch (172). The last reference occurs in 1880 (173), by which time the establishment of the large newsroom and other current information facilities at the Free Public Library had possibly rendered private provision less necessary.

Meantime, it seems that more typical book clubs had continued to be established, for in 1845 Alfred Rooker was able to record that: "The private book societies in Plymouth are numerous and respectable"(174). One of them might have been the PLYMOUTH READING SOCIETY, which is mentioned in an advertisement by the bookseller G. H. Lidstone in 1849 (175), although this might have been some form of commercial venture by Lidstone rather than a genuine bookclub which used his premises (vid. sup. p.129). In the advertisement he informed readers that many additions of new and popular literature had been added, and that the "distinguished patronage" of "resident Nobility and Gentry"

is a testimony to the sound principles of the Society.

The evidence for bookclubs at Plymouth is therefore sparse, unsatisfactory, and rather disappointing. The ones which are strongly suggested by general early references to be likely to have the typical characteristics of bookclubs are tantalisingly elusive, and the individual clubs for which some details have been found appear not to be typical bookclubs, but some form of special variant such as the newspaper libraries or possibly a hybrid version - the evidence is not adequate to enable any firm conclusions to be made about them.

4.2.2 Bookclubs at Devonport

The earliest reference to a bookclub at Devonport seems to be in 1812:

> "A Book Club established amongst some of the principal inhabitants, which will probably give rise to others." (176)

but it is by no means certain that the writer of the guidebook was using the term "bookclub" in the sense being considered here. It could, of course, be a genuine bookclub; or, as seems more likely, he might have been referring to the library facility which was probably the most evident feature of the Dock Literary and Philosophical Society founded in 1808. There was a DEVONPORT READING SOCIETY listed among the subscribers to a local guidebook in 1828 (177). By 1830 there was the STOKE READING SOCIETY, established among "a few gentlemen", and "supplied with the most approved works as they issue from the press." The treasurer of this Society was a naval officer, Capt. M. Dixon (178). There also existed an organisation with the title "Plymouth, Stonehouse, and Devonport Medical Reading Society" which was based in Devonport, but the name is misleading and the character of the group was of a private subscription library character; it is described in Chapter 9. In 1879 a STOKE DAMEREL READING AND RECREATION SOCIETY was opened in the schoolhouse at Stoke Church, but nothing more is known about it; it seems likely that, despite the title, this was one of the numerous groups of mainly working class origin which emerged in the nineteenth century as a new form of book club and under other generic types of library to be described in Chapter 6.

4.2.3 Bookclubs at Stonehouse

The first reference to any organisation which can loosely be described as a bookclub at Stonehouse is in 1821, when a guidebook described the recently opened STONEHOUSE READING ROOM (179). It appears to have been of the newspaper club type similar to those already described at Plymouth. Its members were mainly naval and military gentlemen, presumably mostly, if not all, officers, who were admitted by ballot. The subscription was claimed to be moderate, and the daily and weekly newspapers, the navy and army lists, and similar publications were available. This organisation continued to be mentioned in directories until 1843 (180) but not thereafter. One possible reason for this is the establishment by the Admiralty and War Office of libraries and newsrooms for the Armed Services from about 1840 onwards, which might have resulted in the withdrawal of subscriptions by the majority of former users of the Stonehouse Reading Room.

A series of Carrington's guidebooks from 1828 to 1843 carry the statement that "Several reading societies have been established in Stonehouse". One of them, the STONEHOUSE READING SOCIETY, was a subscriber to the 1828 edition of that series; it is possible, however, that this was the name of the society which met at the Stonehouse Reading Room, and not another organisation. Stonehouse had a coffee room, but no reference has been found to any literary activity such as that which which operated at the Plymouth Coffee Room.

Although the evidence is sparse for Stonehouse, it does accord quite well with the social background of the place. It was primarily a naval area, with the Royal Naval Hospital, the Royal Marine Barracks, and Victualling Yards, and it was evidently from the people involved in those employments that the membership of the Stonehouse Reading Room was drawn. The establishment of separate libraries and reading rooms by the Navy and Royal Marines reduced the need for Servicemen to support the civilian establishment, and probably contributed to its demise. Later, after the population of Stonehouse had become overwhelmingly working class, the need of the working man to read gave rise to new types of clubs and associations.

4.3 PRIVATE SUBSCRIPTION LIBRARIES

Private subscription libraries differed from bookclubs in that they aimed at permanent collections of books, and consequently needed adequate premises in which to house the growing libraries. Sometimes the accommodation was rented, but frequently the private subscription libraries obtained their own buildings through purchase or by erecting them. The property belonging to the subscribers could be of considerable value, and some libraries were run on the lines of joint stock companies, each proprietor purchasing a share in the property which could be transferred or sold, subject to the purchaser or transferee being acceptable to the other proprietors and agreeing to observe the rules. In non-proprietary libraries there might be an entrance fee, but this did not entitle the member to a share in the property. In all cases, annual subscriptions were paid. The cost of joining and subscribing varied considerably, but Kelly quotes indicative costs of about 4-5 gns. share and 6s. - 10s. annual subscription by about 1800, rising to the region of £20 and 1 gn. in the 1820s (181). Prospective members were required to be elected into membership, usually by ballot by the proprietors or subscribers. Officers were elected by the members, and the Committee governed the Library on behalf of the members, devising rules, selecting books for purchase, fixing loan periods, etc. The subscribers met at least annually to sanction the Committee's work and take decisions on any necessary matters. The growing collections of books required the care of a librarian, who was not necessarily a fulltime employee, and he was very much the servant of his committee with virtually no power of decision or discretion. He kept the records needed to control the issue of books and ensure that volumes were not lost; and he wrestled with the problems of how to arrange the catalogue and physical collections. The large private subscription libraries were, together with the national and university libraries, the cradles from which modern library management and administration have developed.

Private subscription libraries were essentially libraries for the middle classes, despite the occasional existence of an early working class example such at Leadhills and elsewhere, particularly in Scotland. Frequently the libraries were known as "gentlemen's subscription libraries" although ladies were not specifically

excluded it seems to have become more usual for them to become members in the second half of the nineteenth-century rather than before then. The subscription of the head of the household made it possible for books to be borrowed for the use of his immediate family, and often enabled them to use the libraries for reference purposes either free of charge or at a minimal additional charge.

The earliest private subscription libraries have been shown by Kelly to have appeared once again among the clergy, such as the conversion of Norwich Town Library into a subscription library in 1656. The first true secular library is considered to be the unusual working class subscription library at Leadhills, but this was atypical. The first proprietary library in England was formed in Liverpool in 1758 by the merger of three reading societies; the library achieved rapid success and had a stock of over 8,000 volumes by 1800. Liverpool was taken as a model by others which quickly followed: 1765 Manchester, 1768 Leeds, and 1779 Birmingham (182), to name but a few. By the early nineteenth-century the large towns had their private subscription libraries and the movement was spreading into smaller places in the 1820s and 1830s. One of the latest, and probably the greatest private subscription library to be founded was the London Library in 1841; but this was verging on the early phase of rate-supported public libraries, and as the latter grew, the support for private subscription libraries generally dwindled and many went out of existence.

Bristol, at the gateway to the Westcountry, converted its old endowed library into the Bristol Library Society Library in 1772, and the movement came slowly westward. The short-lived Exeter Library Society was established in 1776 (183). Tavistock, a small mining centre a few miles north of the Three Towns started its library in 1799(184). In Cornwall, the ambitious Cornwall County Library was established in 1792 (185). The inhabitants of the Three Towns could not have been unaware of this, but it seems likely that the civic and social leaders were heavily preoccupied by more pressing matters such as the effects of war which left penniless widows and orphans to be cared for, the collapsed overseas trade which had to be reconstructed, and the need for social amenities which would benefit the many rather than the select few who would have welcomed a library. It was in 1810 that

Plymouth established the Plymouth Public Library which in later years was renamed the Plymouth Proprietary Library to distinguish it from its rate-supported namesake. Devonport established the Devonport Public Library in 1827, after a few years of struggling to obtain the target number of subscribers. Stonehouse never achieved a private subscription library . The first private subscription library in the Three Towns was actually the fourth to be established in the counties of Devon and Cornwall, but it has outlived the other three, and is not only the oldest surviving library of its kind in Devon and Cornwall, but one of the few in the country which still operates under arrangements similar to those which were usual in the heyday of private subscription libraries, although it lost its premises and most of its stock in the Blitz of 1941.

4.4 PLYMOUTH PROPRIETARY LIBRARY

4.4.1 The origin and establishment of the Library

The immediate post Napoleonic War period saw a surge in civic pride and responsibility among the inhabitants of Plymouth, who were ably led by members of prominent local families such as the Woollcombes, the Lockyers, and many others. One of the first civic schemes was to erect a ballroom, hotel and theatre, subscriptions being raised on the popular tontine principle. The advertisement describiing the arrangements also included the statement that:

> "It is intended to appropriate a part of one of the buildings to a public library." (186)

The announcement, signed by the Mayor and nine leading citizens, was dated 25 October 1810; within two weeks, the Mayor was able to issue a subscription list showing that £11,000 of the required £20,000 capital had already been subscribed (187). As each subscription was required to be not less than £100, this rapid take-up shows that there were a considerable number of wealthy people in the area. Major contributors included the Lockyer, Fuge and Langmead families, and the list also included many local notables such as George Eastlake and Henry Woollcombe who were to be closely connected with the Library which was eventually established. It seems, however, that some of these contributors were already having second thoughts about having a library tucked away in the ballroom, hotel or theatre buildings. Possibly they foresaw the problems which might be created by having a privately owned library in a municipally owned complex (188). George Eastlake in particular clearly felt that a separate library was a better solution (189). It was mainly due to his efforts that a public meeting was convened on 20 November 1810 at which it was resolved unanimously as follows:

> "1. That the establishment of a Public Library, for the general diffusion of science and literature, to be connected with a News-Room, as intimated in the printed proposal, will be an important advantage to the towns of Plymouth, Dock, Stonehouse, and the surrounding country.
>
> 2. That this Meeting do agree to the establishment of such an Institution, to be called THE PLYMOUTH PUBLIC LIBRARY.
>
> 3. That the number of Proprietors be, at present, limited

to one hundred; and that any extension of the number, subject to a ballot, do remain for future consideration.

4. That each Proprietor do subscribe Thirty Guineas as a Capital; and such subscription, annually, as shall hereafter be found necessary to the support of the Institution, to become due on the 1st. of January in every year." (190)

The cost of a share, 30 gns. was comparatively high; at Birmingham the price of a share in 1812 was only £10 (191). The Plymouth share price might have been fixed at such a high level because it was the specific intention from the beginning not only to obtain a good collection of books but also to erect a building. The sixth resolution of the foundation meeting was:

"6. That the primary object of the institution be the gradual formation of a Library, comprising the most useful and approved works in ancient and modern literature; and afterwards, as the Institution shall grow in ability, the purchase of ground, and the erection of a building, suitable for a Library and Newsroom, to be vested in Trustees; unless appropriate apartments can be provided for the purpose, within the scheme of the new buildings, now on foot, for an Hotel and Ballroom." (192)

The element of doubt about the suitability of the civic sponsored complex of buildings was plain in the end of the resolution, which probably made the proviso out of politeness and not intent; nothing more seems to have been said about it. Although the price of shares had been fixed quite high, there was no difficulty in obtaining the requisite number of proprietors - in fact they ended up with 102 instead of the one hundred stipulated (193). The majority of those who had subscribed to the civic scheme also took shares in the Library, but it is interesting to notice that although many ladies were on the civic share list, not one lady appears on the list of original library proprietors. The reasons why the subscriptions were taken up so rapidly is a matter for speculation. There were certainly those who had a natural taste for literature and regretted the fact that it was difficult to obtain some of the more serious and less popular works in Plymouth; others, it must be suspected, took up shares for prestige purposes. There is no overt evidence that the establishment of the Library had the strong non-conformist support found in some other places such as Birmingham.

The establishment of the Library moved forward rapidly and

confidently. The foundation meeting elected a Temporary Committee to draft laws and regulations, but ruled that the meetings of that Committee were open to any proprietor who might choose to attend; the quorum consisted of five proprietors, of whom three must be committee members (194). A general meeting was held in the Guildhall on 18 December to confirm the *Laws and regulations* and to appoint the Committee for the first year (195), but details of this meeting are lacking. The Mayor granted the temporary use of a room in the Guildhall for the nucleus of the book collection to be stored until a proper building could be erected (196). A site was purchased in Cornwall St., and a Building Committee was appointed on 22 October 1811 (197). Although over £3,000 had been raised by the original share subscriptions part of this had already been expended to form a "very valuable collection of books" (198), and it appears that a separate sum of £1,400 had been subscribed towards the site and new building by early 1812 (199). The Annual Meeting on 4 December 1812 was required to consider the proposed extension of the number of proprietors in order to raise sufficient building capital (200), but it seems that complete agreement was not reached, and a special meeting was called on 18 December to consider and determine the details of measures to raise money for building and furnishing the Library, and to examine the report and estimates of the Building Committee (201). The capital was raised by creating 102 extra shares, and giving the existing 102 proprietors a chance to acquire an extra share each; these shares were fixed at £20 each, not £30 as originally, but there appears to be no distinction between them at a later date. All but 31 proprietors took up their extra share, and the Library held the others available to sell as suitable new members were found (202). This enabled the building to go ahead rapidly, and on 12 August 1813 Mr. Eastlake, who had become the President, issued a notice that the building was finished and ready for use; he called a general meeting of the proprietors in the new building on 24 August (203). The financial problems had not been completely solved, for a meeting was held on 10 September to consider further the ways and means of paying the outstanding debts. If a "voluntary loan of £2,000 or £1,500" was not forthcoming, it was intended to proceed in accordance with the "Eighth Law" and call upon every proprietor for "his rateable proportion of the deficiency, ..." (204). On this occasion many subscribers apparently advanced loans of 10 gns. on their shares, which enabled the debt to the tradesmen to be liquidated,

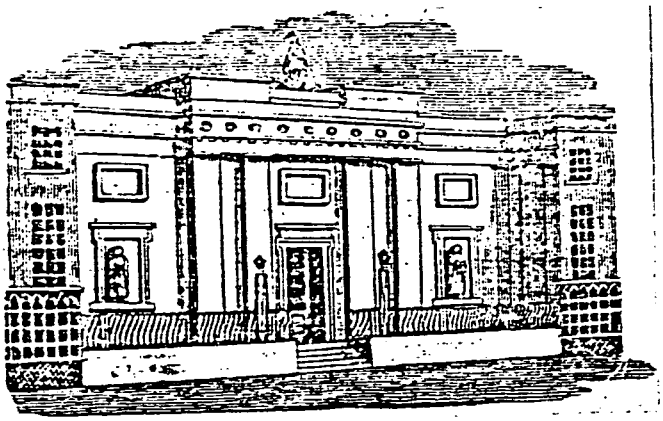
and the subscribers' loans were gradually redeemed by 1833 (205). The Library had so far cost about £5,000 (206), of which about £1,000 had been spent on books and £4,000 on the building (207); but the result was a building which was considered to add lustre to the town, not only for the collection of books, but also for the fine architecture, for it was one of the many interesting buildings designed by John Foulston, who was also the designer of the Theatre and Hotel complex in which the Library was originally to have been situated. Figures 12 and 13 illustrate the original front of the building and the reading room, and a sketch plan of the building is shown in Fig. 14 . The building was based on an Athenian temple design, and was described at length in early guidebooks of which the following is one of the briefest and clearest account:

> "The Public Library is in Cornwall Street, near the western entrance to the market. The front is coated with Roman cement, and presents an elegant appearance: it is devoid of windows, the several rooms being lighted from cupolas in the roof. The entrance from the street is through a vestibule, on either side of which are the committee and news-rooms. At the end of the vestibule is the library, a spacious and handsome apartment, furnished with a double range of bookshelves. Access is afforded to the upper, by a flight of stairs, concealed behind the pilasters, which decorate the angles, and lead to a corridor surrounding the apartment. Each of the four sides of the room is surmounted by a beautiful segment arch, richly ornamented, and supporting the roof, which terminates in a light and elegant dome, resting on fluted pillars." (208)

Now that the Library had its initial stock and a fine building it had a sound basis upon which to develop and can be said to have been fairly established

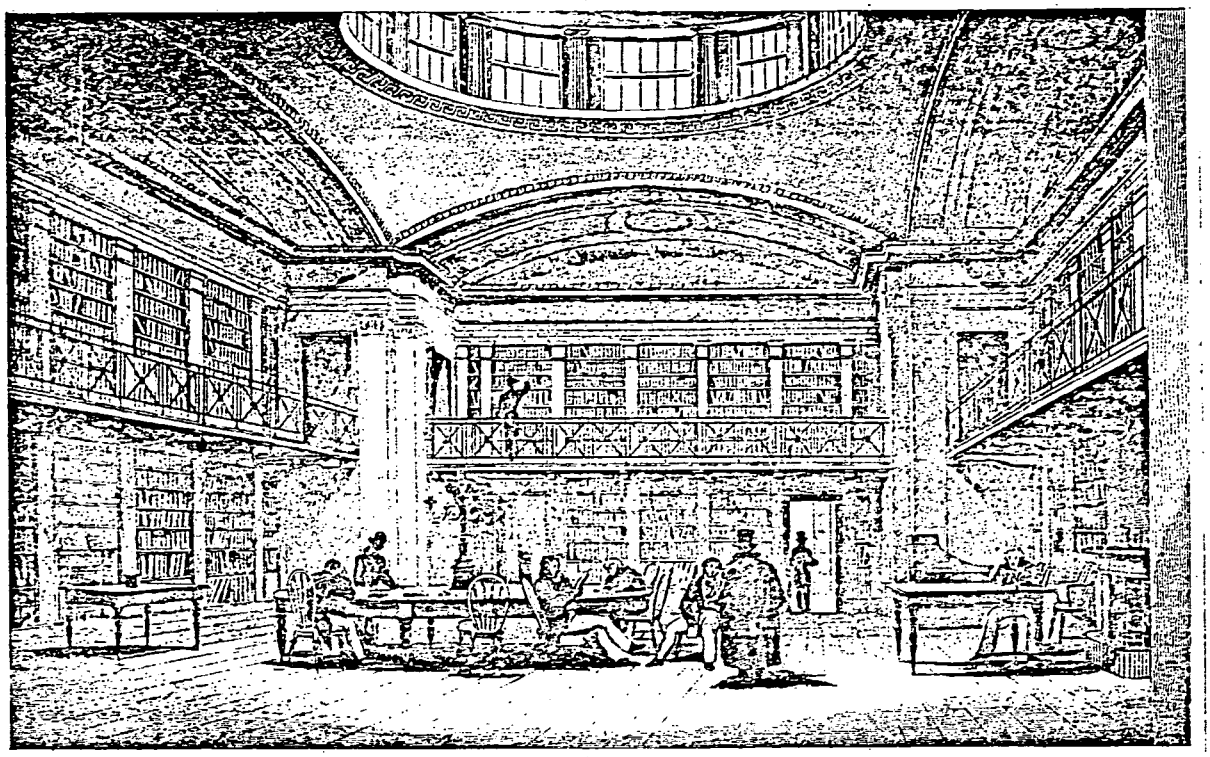
4.4.2 The early period, 1814 - 1849

The first steps taken by the proprietors after they had achieved the new building was to put their affairs in order. A Deed of Foundation dated 31 August 1814 vested their property in ten Trustees (209), and on 7 January 1814 the *Laws* were approved (210). A printed copy of this document has survived, and gives a detailed picture of the Library as it was to operate for many years (211). From this fifteen-page document the Library appears to have the typical characteristics common to proprietary libraries. The property was held in 204



12

PLYMOUTH PROPRIETARY LIBRARY



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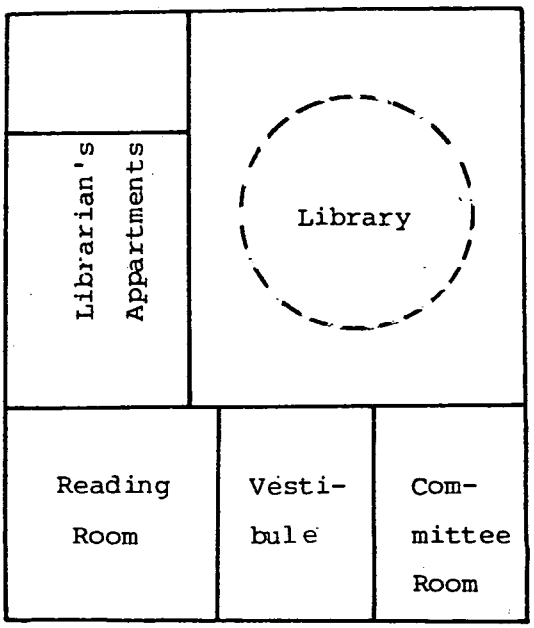


Fig. 12 Original exterior

Fig. 13 Interior of Library

Fig. 14 Plan

equal shares, and was vested in trustees. Shares could be transferred or bequeathed provided that the assignee or legatee was officially admitted by the Committee and registered by the Registrar. There was a General Committee, elected by ballot annually in January, consisting of the President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Secretary and Registrar, plus sixteen proprietors. It met monthly, and any provisional regulations formed by it were subject to confirmation at the half yearly meetings of proprietors. The Committee was required to elect from its own membership sub-committees for Finance and accounts, New books and bindings, and any other sub-committee it judged proper.

There were two main classes of membership, Proprietor and Annual Subscribers. The proprietor's subscription was three guineas "until the discharge of the loan", unless the proprietor was a lady, in which case she paid two guineas and was entitled to the proprietor's privileges in respect of the Library only (i.e. not the Newsroom). The annual subscriber: paid three guineas to use the Library, or four guineas to use the Newsroom and Library. Proprietors also had rights which led to the recognition of other official categories of user. A proprietor with more than one share could nominate one gentleman on each extra share, and he could use the Newsroom and Library for reference only at the Visitor's subscription of two guineas; or the proprietor could nominate a lady who could use the Library for two guineas per annum, which entitled her to borrow books. Every proprietor had the right to nominate on each share he owned one young man aged 15 - 21 years, as a Reader in the Library only. Every proprietor could introduce as a Stranger any gentleman who had lived less than three months in the Three Towns; the privilege of a Stranger was confined to reference use of the Library and Newsroom for a maximum of three months. The Mayor (if a proprietor) and the President had the special right of introducing any number of Strangers. No-one else was permitted to use the Newsroom or the Library, which were open from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m., unless the Committee gave special permission, such as to the donor of a valuable gift who was on an occasional visit to Plymouth.

The Committee exercised the power to decide which books, newspapers, maps and periodicals should be purchased; to sell superfluous books or newspapers; to decide the time newspapers and periodicals should remain in the Newsroom and Library; decide on loan periods; to

exact fines for overdue retention of books or damage to them; to allocate works into loan categories or to interdict their circulation; to suspend defaulters; and so on. Each June the Library was closed from 20th. to 30th. in order that a special sub-committee appointed by the Committee could examine its state and condition.

The Librarian's post and responsibilities are dismissed in two paragraphs, which are again quite typical of the time.

> "1. The Librarian, and such Servants as it may be found necessary to employ, shall be appointed by the Committee, be under their direction, and be removable at their discretion; and the Committee shall also regulate their salaries and wages.
>
> 2. The Librarian shall be deemed responsible for the value of all the books which shall be deposited in the Library; and in case of the loss of any book or books, not accounted for to the satisfaction of the Committee, he shall, at their discretion, be liable to replace, or make compensation for the same."

A little extra light on the operation of the Library is shed by the *Regulations for the circulation of books* which were appended to the *Laws*. To obtain a book, every member had to apply to the Librarian by letter or in person. Only two works were allowed at a time, with a maximum total of four volumes. Proprietors could borrow "interdicted books" (reference books) upon written application to the President. Overdue charges were 2d. per day, up to the price of the volume or volumes, and these charges were paid to the Librarian. Members living at Dock or Stonehouse were allowed one extra day for the return of books, and two extra days for members living more than two miles away. No reference was made to the way in which issues were recorded, presumably a ledger, or the existence of a catalogue.

The first Librarian appears to have been Joseph Wilde, who was probably appointed when the Library building was opened in 1813; his name is recorded in directories for 1814 (212) and 1822 (213), and his address appears as the Library, where, as has been described above, there were apartments for his use. Nothing has yet been found about the previous history of Mr. Wilde, who was over sixty years old when appointed; his wife died at Plymouth in 1818 (214) and he retired in about 1823 and went to live near Sheffield, where he died in 1825 (215). He was succeeded as Librarian by a much younger man, Abel Keen, who had become a proprietor in 1817 and obtained a second share in 1823 (216);

he sold both shares in March and April 1824 (217) which suggest that he became Librarian at this time, for the Librarian could not be both a master (proprietor) and a servant of the Library. He remained in post until at least July 1834, when his marriage announcement described him as Librarian of the Public Library (218). He seems to have resigned soon afterwards, for in 1836 the Librarian was Samuel Skelton, who was also a private teacher of writing and arithmetic (219). By 1843 Skelton had been succeeded by Alfred Rae (220) who remained in office until 1849, when he resigned (221) and was succeeded in his turn by Llewellyn Jewitt, of whom more will be said later.

An interesting sidelight on the Library and its stock-building occurs in the diary of Humphrey Woollcombe, who described a meeting with the Prince Regent's Librarian, Dr. Clarke, when dining with Sir Diggory Forrest together with other notable local people, Governor Creyke, Dr. Remmett, and Mr. Whidbey:

> "I ... found it was the Prince Regent's Librarian, and the Editor of *The life of Nelson*. I sat next to him, he talked much of our Library, praised it highly, recommended several Books that we ought to have, and suggested what I have already considered to be desirable, a good collection of works relating to the history of our own country. He recommended our getting Castle's *History* , spoke well of Guthrie's, and Ralph's which I never saw or heard of before." (222)

Even as early as January 1812, Woollcombe had been able to record:

> "I have lately derived much satisfaction from the Library recently established here; this and other establishments have rendered Plymouth a much pleasanter residence than I at first found it when I settled here ...." (223)

By about 1834 the stock had grown to about 3,500 volumes, and a more rapid build up took place over the next decade, in which 1,650 volumes were added (224). By the early 1840s the Library had reached over 5,000 volumes of "select and valuable" stock to which "new publications are constantly added", and "the newsroom is regularly supplied with the daily and weekly London and provincial journals." (225) Alphabetical catalogues of the stock were published in 1812, 1814 and 1824 (226) but in 1834 a broad subject classification was adopted, with alphabetical sub-arrangement (227). This arrangement was repeated in "substantially the same" form in the 1843 *Catalogue*, a copy of which has survived (228). It contains twelve classes, each sub-arranged in alphabetical order of the subject as determined by the key words of titles (Fig. 15), and an index is provided to the authors and the titles of serials and anonymous

Poetry, (Classic) Specimens of, by Charles Abraham Elton, 3 v. 8vo. ..... *Lond.* 1814
———, (English) History of, by Dr. Thomas Warton, 4 v. 8vo. ..... —— 1824
*———, Music, &c. Essay on, by Dr. James Beattie, 8vo. ..... *Edin.* 1778
———, Reflections on, by the Abbé Du Bos, translated by Thomas Nugent, 3 v. 8vo. .. *Lond.* 1748
Poets, (English) Lectures on the, by William Hazlitt, 8vo. ..... —— 1819
Polymetis, by Rev. Joseph Spence, fol. .... —— 1755
Pope, (Alexander) the Works of, by Rev. William Lisle Bowles, 10 v. 8vo. ..... —— 1806
Portraits, Foreign and English, with Memoirs, 7 v. 4to. ..... —— 1833
Psyche, and other Poems, by Mrs. M. Tighe, 8vo. ..... —— 1811
Public Galleries, Hand Book to the, by Mrs. Jameson, 2 v. 8vo. ..... —— 1842

Racine, (Jean) Œuvres de, 5 t. 12mo. ..... *Paris* 1799
Rejected Addresses, 12mo. ..... *Lond.* 1812
Remains of Nithsdale and Galloway Song, by R. H. Cromek, 8vo. ..... —— 1810
Reynolds, (Sir Joshua) the Works of, 3 v. 8vo. —— 1809
———, Commemoration of, by Martin Archer Shee, 12mo. ..... —— 1814
Rhymes of Art, by the same, 12mo. ..... —— 1809
Rimini, the Story of, a Poem, by L. Hunt, 12mo. ..... —— 1819
Rogers' (Samuel) Poems, viz.—
*Human Life, and other Poems, 12mo. .. —— 1819
Italy, 2 v. 12mo. ..... —— 1823
Pleasures of Memory, 12mo. ..... —— 1804
*Rome, View of Modern (from Monte Gianocolo) *Rome* 1765

Sabbath, (The) and other Poems, by James Grahame, 12mo. ..... *Edin.* 1808
Saga, Frithiof's, (a Legend of the North) by E. Tegner, 8vo. ..... *Stockholm* 1839
*Saltram, Catalogue of the Pictures, &c. at, 12mo. ..... *Plymo.* 1819
Sappho, Theocritus, &c. translations from, by Edward Du Bois, 12mo. ..... *Lond.* 1799
Scott's (Sir Walter) Poems, viz.—
Bridal of Triermain, 12mo. ..... *Edin.* 1813
Harold the Dauntless, 12mo. ..... —— 1817
Lady of the Lake, 8vo. ..... —— 1810
Lay of the Last Minstrel ..... *Lond.* 1811
Lord of the Isles, 8vo. ..... *Edin.* 1815
Marmion, 8vo. ..... —— 1811
Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border, 3 v. 8vo. —— 1810
Rokeby, 8vo. ..... —— 1813
Sculpture, Lectures on, by John Flaxman, 8vo. ..... *Lond.* 1829
——— *and Painting, by T. Carter*, fol. ..... —— 1838
Shakspeare, (William) the Dramatic Works of, by Rev. Samuel Ayscough, 8vo. ..... —— 1807
———, Index to, by the same, 8vo. ..... —— 1790
———, Illustrations of, by F. Douce, 2 v. 8vo. ..... —— 1807
Shakspeare's Plays, by Samuel Johnson and George Steevens, revised by Isaac Reed, 21 v. 8vo. ..... —— 1813
Vol. 1.—Advertisements—Various Prefaces—Life and Anecdotes of Shakspeare—Shakspeare's Will, &c. &c.
2.—Essay on the Learning of Shakspeare—Lists of Ancient and Modern Editions of Shakspeare's Plays and Poems, &c. &c.

Fig. 15. Plymouth Proprietary Library *Catalogue* 1843.

works. Approximately 2,250 works are entered in Classes 1 - 11, and nearly one hundred serials in Class 12. The works were distributed within the classes in the approximate percentages shown in Table 17 .

Table 17. Plymouth Public (Proprietary) Library stock 1843.

Class	Subject heading	% works
1	Theology and ecclesiastical history	6
2	General history, biography and antiquities	12
3	British history, biography and antiquities; heraldry & numismatics	15
4	Mental and moral philosophy, and education	4
5	Jurisprudence; politics; Parliamentary Reports and documents; political economy including commerce and statistics	10
6	Natural history; arts and sciences, including encyclopaedias	11
7	Belles lettres; poetry; drama, and fine arts	9
8	Language, dictionaries and grammars	2
9	Geography, topography, voyages and travels	16
10	Auctores Classici, Graeci et Latini	3
11	Miscellaneous literature; novels and romances; essays and tracts	14

Some classes, particularly 7, 9 and 11, contained several collected works, so that on a volume analysis they would achieve a higher percentage than revealed above. Class 5 contained extensive runs of *Parliamentary papers* which had been donated by the Government. About ten percent of all works had been donated, particularly in the subjects of theology, natural history, and the government publications just mentioned. Apart from the Classics, the amount of foreign language material was small; several French works scattered throughout the classes were mainly donated; some Latin works appear among older theological and legal literature, again mainly donated. Rare examples of the Committee purchasing foreign language items seem to be *Biographie universelle*, 71 volumes dated 1811, and a series of dictionaries (Greek, Latin, Hebrew, Spanish and French), all of which were for reference use only. Most of the editions of Greek and Latin classics in Class 10 also appear to have been purchased. As the Library's acquisitions

policy had to reflect the tastes of its members in order to retain financial support, it can be reasonably inferred that the most popular subjects were the largest classes, viz. history, biography, natural history, geography and novels. This would have been typical of the tastes of the period, and it is further borne out by the analysis of acquisitions purchased between March 1843 and March 1846 (229), which revealed in order of popularity: 25% Class 11 (miscellaneous literature including novels), 16% Class 3 (British history, biography and antiquities), between 10 - 12% each for Classes 2 (General history), 6 (Natural history) and 9 (Geography and travel). There were no additions to Class 10 (Classics), and only 1 - 2% to Class 4 (Mental and moral philosophy) and 8 (Languages).

In 1849 the Library was in a sound financial condition. Its income was over £400, and the credit balance carried forward from the previous year was over £150. During the year nearly £200 was spent on the purchase of over 300 new volumes, £60 on the Librarian's salary, £100 was earmarked for the imminent extension, and the balance of expenditure, which amounted to about £87, was accounted for by unspecified sums on newspapers and periodicals, binding 105 volumes, lighting wages, insurance and miscellaneous items (230). Not only was the Library in a sound financial condition, but its pre-eminence as the largest and most important library in the Three Towns seems to have been established. This was further underlined by events in the next four momentous years, 1849 - 1853, which saw massive expansion due to the acquisition of the Cottonian Library and the Halliwell-Phillips Collection, and the period was marked, too, by the librarianship of Llewellyn Jewitt who made a tremendous impact on the town of Plymouth. Each of these will be considered separately and in some detail at this point, before returning to the general history of the Library in section 4.4.6 on page 173.

4.4.3 The Cottonian Library.

The Cottonian Library, consisting of about 2,100 volumes of books and about 5,000 prints, drawings and paintings, came to Plymouth largely by happy accident, for in the early years of its main formation there was no local connection. The nucleus of the collection had been formed in London by William Townson, a Customs official who was a

connoisseur of the fine arts (231); he bequeathed it to his protegee Charles Rogers, who had worked for Townson at the Customs House, and was probably strongly influenced by him as an art connoisseur and book collector. The acquisitions of these two men cannot always be distinguished, but it is certain that Rogers considerably augmented the prints and drawings through friends and agents in the art world. His friends included Sir Joshua Reynolds, Kaufmann, Romney, etc., whose work was represented besides the Old Masters such as Leonardo da Vinci, Raphael, Michelangelo, Rubens and Rembrandt. The collection passed to William Cotton, Charles Rogers's brother-in-law, on the latter's death in 1784; and upon the death of William Cotton (the first) in 1791 to his son William Cotton (the second). The latter sold many of the most valuable items in 1799 and 1801, including what was considered to be one of the finest ever collections of Durer's prints; the sales realised about £4,000, the magnitude of which is appreciated when it is remembered that the foundation collections of the British Library had been purchased for £10,000 and £20,000 less than fifty years previously, and only a part of the Townson-Rogers Collection had been sold so in value and magnitude the pre-sale collection was among the best of its kind. The Cotton residence was at the Priory, Leatherhead, but the Devon connection arose when William Cotton (the second) married Catherine Savery of Rattery in Devon. On the death of William Cotton (the second) the remainder of the Collection passed to his son, William Cotton (the third), who had something of the spirit of Townson and Rogers in him, and did all he could to restore the Collection to its former glory, in particular by adding a collection of Reynolds relics. Cotton lived at Ivybridge, not far from Sir Joshua Reynold's birthplace at Plympton, and his first wish was to found in Plympton a Reynolds Memorial Institution which would include the collection of books, prints, and drawings. This scheme failed for reasons unspecified but probably connected with the cost of accommodation and upkeep of the Collection. Cotton, however, was determined to ensure the survival of the Collection under conditions in which the public could enjoy it; probably he wished to prevent a repetition of the damage done by his father's sale of the choicest items of the pre-1799 Collection. It was not easy to find a solution. Cotton was prepared to donate the Collection for public amusement and instruction on condition that a suitable room would be provided for its exhibition and that it would be kept intact. He did not offer to provide money for either the establishment or the upkeep of

the Collection, which now became known as the Cottonian Library. The recipients of his offer would therefore be required to provide considerable sums for its initial accommodation and its upkeep. Exeter was approached, but felt unable to accept it (232), and Plymouth Borough Council apparently also felt unable to accept it, although both authorities were in a position to have invoked the 1845 *Museums Act* and used rate income, if they had wished to seize the opportunity. If this was even considered, it was probably rejected because of the lack of general interest in the fine arts, and the paramount priorities of dealing with the new commercial opportunities brought by the railway and the social problems of housing and deficient public services. The dilemma was solved by the proprietors of the Plymouth Public Library, whose members probably contained that section of the Plymouth population which was capable of appreciating the importance of this fine arts collection.

The proprietors offered to erect a suitable room at their own expense and to convey it with the Cottonian Library into the hands of a body of trustees which would be established as custodians. This offer was accepted by Mr. Cotton in 1850, and in 1852 the legal documentation was completed, including a Trust Deed, by virtue of which three trustees were to be appointed by Mr. Cotton, or his representatives, three by the proprietors, and one was chosen jointly by the six appointees. About one half of the Cottonian Library was transferred into its new accommodation and was opened to the public on 1 June 1853; the remainder was transferred on Cotton's death in 1862. The special accommodation for the Cottonian Library was achieved by building an extra apartment over the Committee Room:

> "The Cottonian room is approached by an elegant and spacious staircase from the vestibule. It is a magnificent apartment, highly enriched and lighted by a plate glass lantern. The Panathenic frieze from the Elgin Marbles decorates the upper portion of the room, and the walls will be ornamented with a fine collection of original paintings and drawings." (233)

Figure 16 shows the new room, and Figure 17 shows the remodelled front of the building which was carried out at the same time by the architects Wightwick and Damant. The formerly blank front walls were pierced to give some natural lighting in the Reading Room and Committee Room. The cost of construction was about £1,300, of which about £300 was defrayed out of the funds of the Library and £1,000 came from loans made by proprietors and friends, the last loan being repaid in 1869 (234).

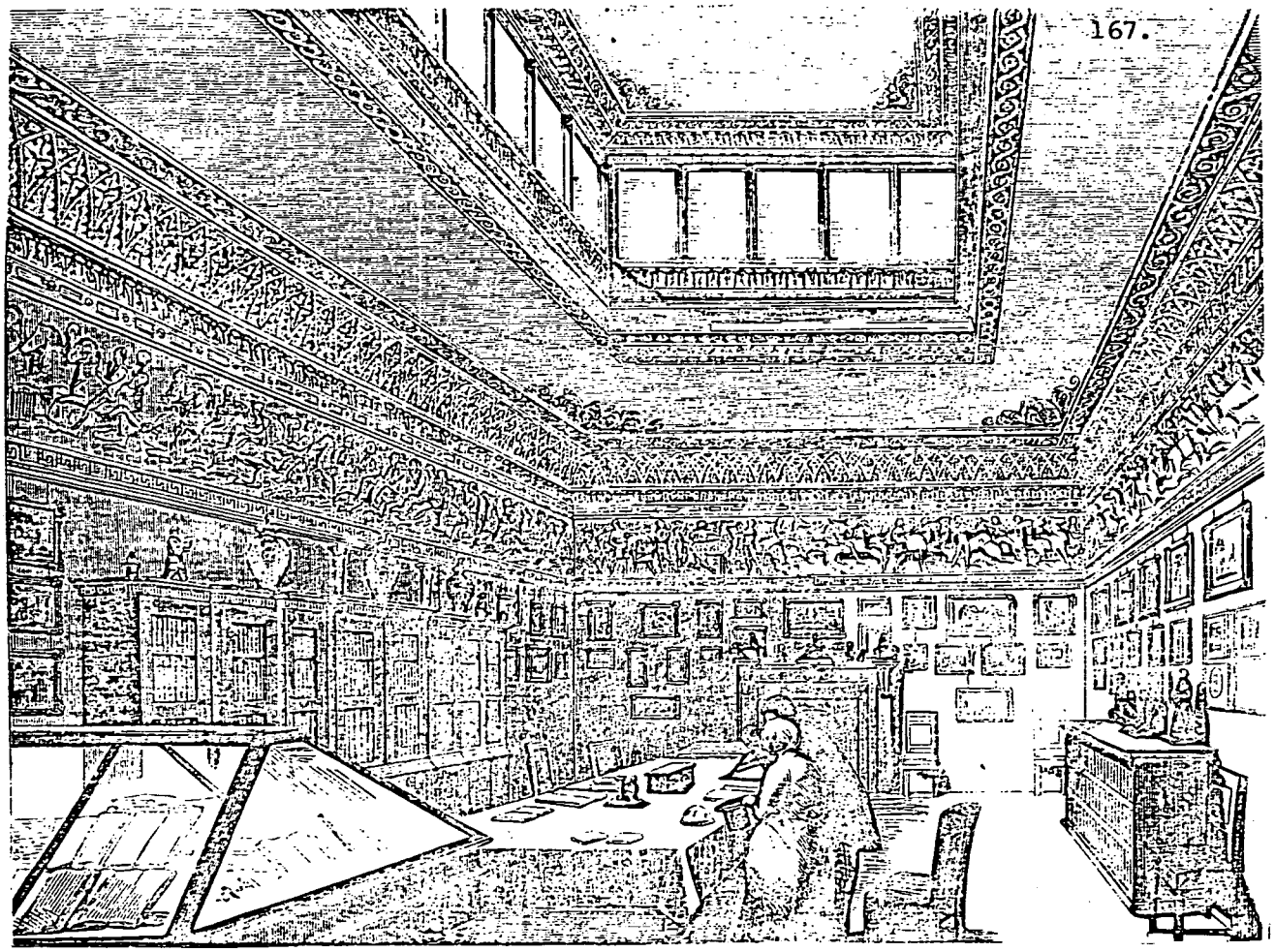


Fig. 16 Plymouth Proprietary Library. Cottonian Room.

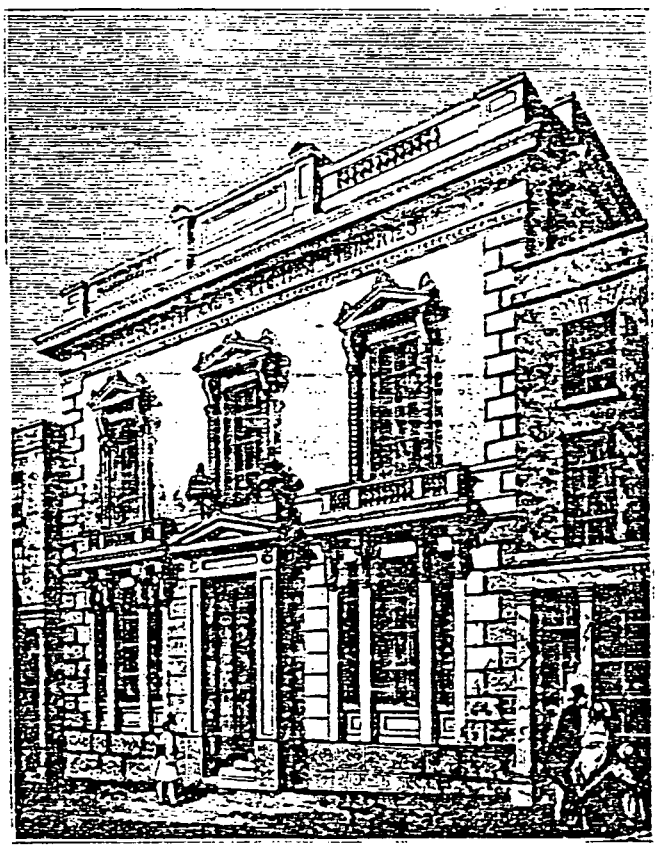


Fig. 17 Plymouth Proprietary Library. Rebuilt front, c. 1852.

A public subscription was opened for the furnishing and final decoration, the list being headed by £50 subscriptions from the Prince Consort and Plymouth Borough Council. It was intended originally that this Fund should be carried on by annual subscriptions to provide for the maintenance of the Cottonian Library, but income from this source failed after a few years, leaving the cost of its upkeep to fall on the proprietors.

The first part of the Cottonian Library was received and arranged by Llewellyn Jewitt, who produced a catalogue, arranged by art form, in 1853 (235). The second half was received in 1862, but no catalogue has been published of it, or of the whole collection, although a manuscript shelf list was compiled in 1878 (236). Exploitation of the collection therefore depended very much upon the Librarian's knowledge of the contents, which were displayed in locked bookcases and exhibition cases. The books included incunabula and other early printed works, as well as a range of works typical of a private gentleman's library - history, travel, literature- and a strong emphasis on the fine arts, including fine volumes of prints. Thus, although Cotton's intention was to make the collection available to the public, the aids for exploitation were deficient and the value of the collection placed a strong responsibility on the Trustees to ensure it's proper preservation and conservation, rather than to encourage exploitation. Strict regulations were drawn up and enforced in 1853, identifying five categories of users with varying privileges (237). Proprietors and Subscribers could view the Cottonian Library every day between the hours of 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., and could inspect items from the locked cases on application to the Librarian between twelve and two o'clock except Mondays; they could be accompanied by not more than two members of their families. Donors of £21 and annual subscribers of 1gn. to the Cottonian Fund had the same privileges. Strangers and Visitors were admitted during the same hours, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m., upon application to the Librarian and signing the Visitors' Book, but they were only allowed to view, not to inspect the contents. Artists and Students in Design could inspect or make copies or drawings (but not tracings) from any item on obtaining written permission from a Trustee. Finally, the Public was admitted to view on Mondays, by tickets obtained from the Librarian. No children under six years were admitted in any category. These rules came into operation on 1 June 1853 and remained in force for the next fifty years. The public access envisaged by Cotton did not come about,

for admission was very restricted and the existence of the Cottonian Library was virtually forgotten by the public at large. The subscription fund soon failed, and the full cost of lighting, insurance, etc. fell upon the proprietors, whose Librarian was also the Curator of the Cottonian Library. Both of these circumstances were viewed with concern by the proprietors in the late nineteenth century; a possible solution was a specialist Curator, but there were no funds to pay the salary (238). Eventually, it was arranged that the Corporation of Plymouth should take over the Cottonian Library and administer it through the Museum and Art Gallery Committee, but this failed at the first attempt in 1902 when the Bill containing the relevant clause was withdrawn "on account of matters totally unconnected with this Collection." (239) The matter was pursued, and resulted in 1915 in the dissolution of the Trust and the transfer of the Cottonian Library into a special room in the Museum and Art Gallery which was opened to the public in 1917.[a]

It will be evident from this account of the Cottonian Library that the proprietors made a momentous decision when they offered to accept it on William Cotton's terms. Not only did they have to provide the accommodation, but clearly they required someone with the knowledge and skill to accept and organise the valuable contents of books and fine art prints, drawings, etc. They found the right man in Llewellyn Jewitt.

[a] The Cottonian Library, often called Cottonian Museum, has remained in the Art Gallery, in the original bookcases and display cases, still virtually inaccessible partly because of the preservation requirement but particularly because its contents are not known to scholars who might wish to use them, although a card index was compiled many years ago. As the result of discussions between the author and the Museum staff, a project has been set up to recatalogue the complete collection under the author's supervision. It is hoped that this will not only reveal much previously unrecorded evidence of provenance and ownership of the books, but will provide a detailed classified card catalogue for immediate use and the basis for a published catalogue which will reach the wider public and assist in realising the intentions of the donor.

4.4.4 Llewellyn Jewitt, Librarian 1849 - 1853

In mid-1849 Alfred Rae resigned from the post of Librarian and the Committee began to advertise for a new Librarian. They invited applications from candidates under forty years old with "a general acquaintance with books and other literary intelligence", and who could provide testimonials of character and competence, plus a security of £100. The salary which was offered was £70, an increase of £10 on the previous Librarian's salary, which might possibly indicate that an increased responsibility was envisaged. The duties were not specified but "may be known upon application at the Library." (240) The closing date was 4 July, and the successful candidate was expected to commence immediately. The appointee might have been a surprise to many people, for he had no connection with the area and had no previous library experience, although the latter was of no particular consequence at this time. Llewellyn Jewitt was probably appointed because of his proven literary and artistic ability, which would have been particularly relevant at this time when there was probably already some negotiation about the Cottonian Library, (for £100 was put aside in 1849 for the enlargement of the Library although nothing was finalised until later).

Llewellyn Jewitt was born in 1816 at Kimberworth near Rotherham, and was the seventeenth son of Arthur and Martha Jewitt (241). His father broke with the traditional family employment in the Sheffield cutlery trade and became a private schoolmaster, running academies in several locations in the North of England, where he became a wellknown and successful topographical writer and founder of the *Northern star*, a Yorkshire monthly magazine. He was Llewellyn's sole tutor, and Llewellyn, like several of his brothers, inherited his father's literary enthusiasm. He also shared the artistic ability of his older brothers Orlando and Edwin, who were notable engravers. By the time Llewellyn was twenty he had become an accomplished writer, artist, wood engraver, and general scientist. In 1838 he married and moved to London where he worked as an illustrator of popular literature such as *Penny magazine*, *Pictorial history of England*, and many others. In the next few years he developed a career in journalism during which he made the acquaintance of many notable people. For health reasons he moved to Oxford, then back to London as the manager of the illustrations of *Punch*, again returning

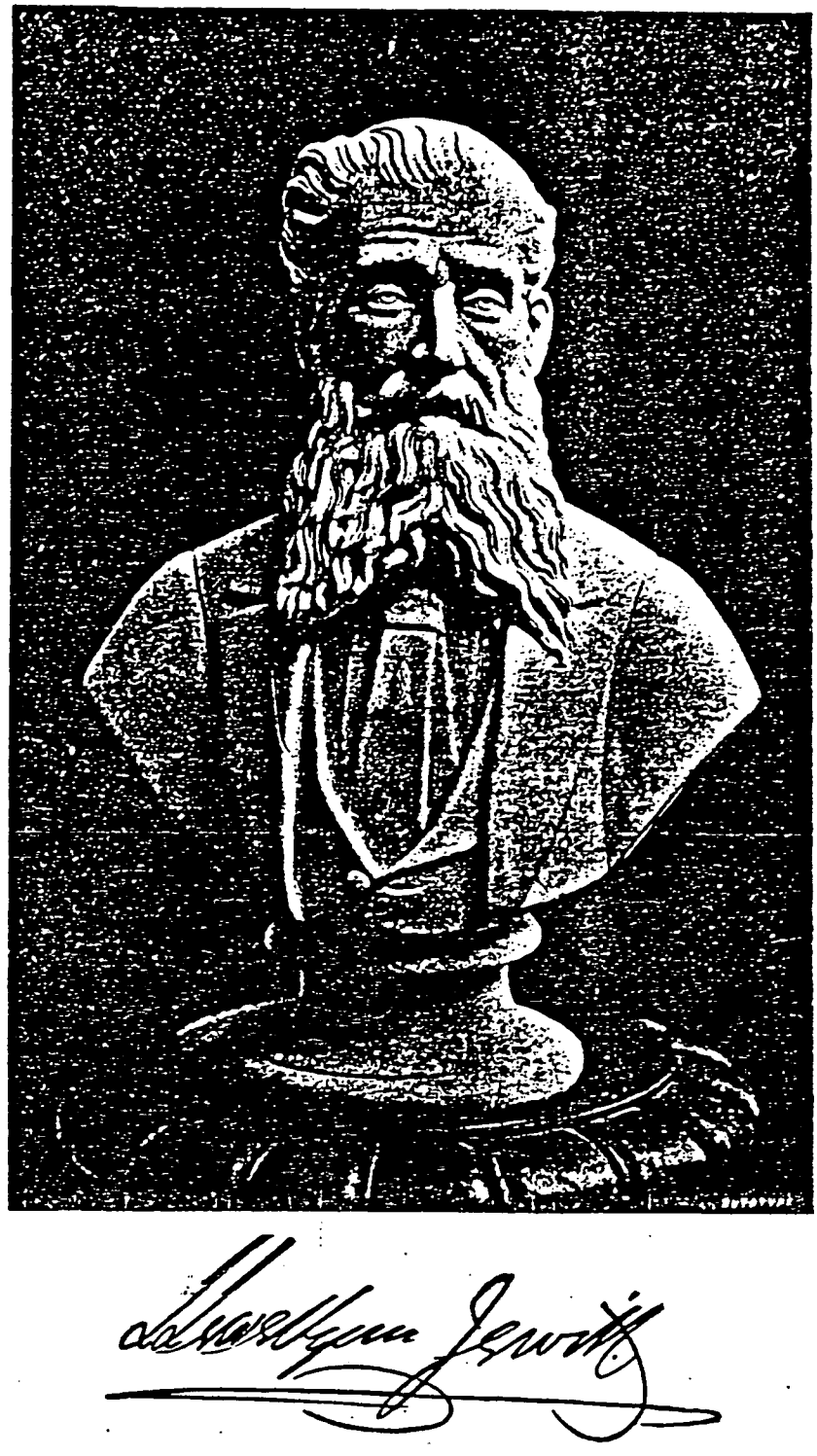


Fig. 18 Bust and autograph of Llewellyn Jewitt

(from W. H. GOSS's *Life and death of Llewellyn Jewitt,1889)*

to Oxford for health reasons. It was at this stage that he applied for the post of Librarian at Plymouth Public Library, believing that the Westcountry air would benefit the health of himself and his family. Clearly the interviewing Committee felt that this candidate had a very suitable literary and artistic ability, and he was not unacquainted with libraries, having used the British Museum Library for his antiquarian and artistic research.

It was during Jewitt's librarianship that the Library building was extended and remodelled, the first part of the Cottonian Library received, organised, displayed and catalogued, and the collection of Halliwell-Phillips manuscripts were added. Clearly he was kept very busy, and the successful arrangement of the Cottonian Library and its *Catalogue* were his main direct contributions to the Plymouth Public Library, plus his good offices in acquiring the Halliwell-Phillips collection. However, he also made an impact on many other institutions in the town in his comparatively short stay, to the extent that the local newspapers printed his encomium:

> "LLEWELLYN JEWITT. As this gentleman is about to leave Plymouth, we deem it but an act of justice to call attention to the great services which, during his residence here, he has rendered to the different public Institutions of this town. The Public Library has been improved under his management; the arrangement of the Cottonian Library in the building has been most creditable to his taste and judgment, and has been carried out gratuitously and with much pains. At the Mechanics' Institutethe advantages of his labours as Secretary, have received ample testimony - in the increase of its members and the introduction of a superior class of lectures. The Plymouth Athenaeum is not without obligation to him - for lectures of a high value, and for taking a prominent part in many interesting discussions there. In all these respects the retirement of Mr. Jewitt from the Public Library, and his departure from the town, will be felt a loss of no inconsiderable kind." (242)

In September 1853 Jewitt left Plymouth for Derby, because of health reasons, but he made later visits and kept in contact with his friends, and published a guidebook and a standard history of the town. Plymouth was a small interlude in the life of this man who achieved a national reputation in the fields of art and literature, but in those four years he achieved more local reputation than many who lived in Plymouth all their lives.

4.4.5 The Halliwell-Phillips Collection

Jewitt had been instrumental in obtaining for the Plymouth Public Library a collection of manuscripts donated by James Orchard Halliwell, later Halliwell-Phillips, the Shakespeare authority. It is not clear how long the two men had been acquainted but before October 1851 Jewitt had acquired some seals via Halliwell for his private collection, and correspondence dated 25 October, mainly on that subject, indicated that Halliwell had already received from Jewitt some information about Shakespeare editions. It is inferred that the information was about the folio Shakespeare of 1623 which was held in the Library, and Halliwell requested more details for possible use in the folio edition of Shakespeare which he was preparing. The details of why Halliwell chose Plymouth for his donation are not known, but Jewitt himself claimed to be the medium through which it was made (243). In 1852 or early 1853 Halliwell donated a collection of 144 manuscripts and printed books to the Library, and in 1853 he published a catalogue which he had compiled himself (244). The collection did not contain many items of local interest, but consisted of:

> "...original documents relating to Devonshire, Somerset Dorset, Wilts (containing an autograph of Lord Burleigh), Surrey, Kent, Berks, Buckinghamshire, Herefordshire, Norfolk, Lincolnshire, and Northumberland; also papers and correspondence of the Archer family of the counties of Essex, Berks and Derby, commencing in 1599, but chiefly belonging to the 18th century; diary and memoranda books of Dr. John King, of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, and Rector of Chelsea, and of Pertenhall, Bedfordshire, 1690-1731, and numerous religious and historical MSS of the 15th, 16th and 17th centuries." (245)

The collection was placed in the Committee Room of the Library, for the problem of space was becoming a serious one, as the extension had been exclusively for the Cottonian Library and did not appear to have resulted in extra space for the main Library.

4.4.6 Library development 1853 - 1914

The result of the donations and extensions in the brief period 1849-53 was an enlarged building with about twenty thousand volumes, if the Cottonian and Law Library deposited collections are included with the fifteen thousand volumes of the main Library itself. Records are lacking to show the detailed development of the Library, but various

glimpses suggest that for many years the Library went on much as it did before the period of brief excitement. The 1854 edition of the *Catalogue*, wrongly styling itself the fifth edition when it was really the sixth, contained over 5,000 works representing about 15,000 volumes (246). A supplement covering the additions 1854-1861 was published in 1861 (247). The 1854 general catalogue was probably produced very quickly by William Hunt, who succeeded Llewellyn Jewitt in 1853; it reverted to one alphabetical sequence of title entries with an author index. This was not sufficiently sophisticated for readers to exploit the large stock of over twenty thousand volumes in 1876, when the next edition was published. The 1876 edition ("sixth" but actually seventh) was planned as a classified arrangement, with five main classes each with appropriate sub-classes, within which the normal arrangement was an alphabetical author and title sequence; indexes of subjects and authors completed the volume (248). This publication contained about 12,000 works, and the balance of stock had changed considerably as the following comparison shows:

		1876	1843
Class I	Theology and ecclesiastical history	4%	(6%)
Class II	Jurisprudence, government and politics	4%	(10%)
Class III	Philosophy, science and the arts	9%	(15%)
Class IV	History, etc.	61%	(42%)
Class V	Belles lettres	22%	(27%)

Little appeared to have been discarded since the 1843 *Catalogue*, and donations had formed a comparatively insignificant number of the acquisitions, so the change of balance, placing a much heavier emphasis on the historical class, including biography, must have been achieved through deliberate purchase.

The Library was continuing to operate under rules which were essentially those established in 1814 and described at the beginning of this account, although there had been a few minor modifications such as revised fines, and the geographical definition of a Stranger was now someone who lived more than twelve miles away. Another modification which had been made, at an unknown date, was that members of a proprietor's or subscriber's family could read in the Library free of charge; this had evidently been a long standing arrangement when in

July 1871 the Committee passed a law prohibiting this facility without the payment of an extra ½ gn. subscription (249). Protests were written to the Press, including the following verses which suggest that the move was particularly against the ladies:

> "Lines dedicated to the Committee of the
> Plymouth Public Library, by A Peri.
>
> A solemn conclave met around
> The board that was not festive
> With looks of wisdom most profound
> And bended brow suggestive.
>
> There rose a perfume of fresh paint
> Comingled with new leather
> There rose a murmur low and faint
> Of talking all together.
>
> Majestic brows were bent in ire
> And learned heads were shaken
> And wrathful eyes shot gleams of fire
> As when great gods awaken.
>
> And doubtless much was said and proved
> By Solomon forgotten
> And then unanimously moved
> The state of things was rotten.
>
> And so the room that once was bright
> Ah me! those vacant places
> Will never never see the light
> Of those fair women faces.
>
> The victims of their choral rage
> Were inoffensive ladies
> Thus do the Herods of our age
> Send innocents to Hades." (250)

Apparently the Committee were not in touch with members' views and the new rule was rescinded by a general meeting, for under the 1876 *Rules* (251) up to three members of a subscriber's family were permitted to read in the Library. The correspondence published in July 1871 on the contentious law is of interest for the light it casts more generally on the Library.

> "... Can it be possible ... in these days of progression, that the Committee have thought fit to curtail the privileges which their members have so long enjoyed? I fear however that such is the fact but I am at a loss to understand on what grounds such a step can have been taken; certainly it cannot be that we do not pay sufficiently for the accommodation given, for there are many proprietors who have long thought we do not get a quid pro quo. One thing is certain, that a much better supply of the best current literature might be obtained on much easier terms." (252)

The writer of that letter probably had in mind one of the larger commercial subscription libraries, but it is possible that he was one of those who were interested in a free public library for Plymouth. Comments in the debate leading to the adoption of the *Public libraries Act* in 1871 occasionally referred to the exclusiveness of the proprietary library and evidently some members were prepared to give up their subscriptions and would prefer to patronise a rate-supported library (see Chapter 7). There was some confusion between the two libraries particularly after 1876 when the rate-supported public library opened, and was also referred to as "Plymouth Public Library". The Plymouth Free Public Library Committee eventually complained about the postal confusion, and at the annual general meeting of proprietors on 11 February 1881 they changed the name formally from Plymouth Public Library to Plymouth Proprietary Library (253). It seems possible that the new competitor had also influenced another change in the laws of the Proprietary Library, for the old regulation which prevented ladies from having access to the Newsrooms had been repealed by 1876, in which year ladies and gentlemen had the same subscriber rights. It was probably about this time that more ladies began to join the Library; there had been no ladies on the original list of proprietors, but ladies soon began to acquire shares through inheritance, many of them selling the shares with little delay, but some were kept by the legatees. The first lady to actually buy a share seems to be Elizabeth Pethick in 1853 (154).

By 1880 the Proprietary Library was facing a serious accommodation problem. A special meeting was held to consider possible solutions, and it was recorded that the Library had increased by some 5,000 volumes in the past twenty years and was now about 16,000 (255). (Perhaps some volumes had been replaced or discarded, for this total is somewhat less than the 20,000 volumes estimate of 1876, but it must be remembered that these were all approximations, and the net result was still a large stock with accommodation problems). The Law Society Library had been located in the Proprietary Library since 1815 (see Chapter 9.3), and the possibility of gaining space by ejecting it had already been considered and rejected in December 1879. Now the house on the east side of the Library was for sale, but the Committee lacked funds to purchase it. A generous and wealthy member, Mr. Robert Bayly, had purchased the house for £1,000 and offered it to the

Committee for the same price. It was agreed by a large majority of the special meeting to purchase the house from Mr. Bayly, raising the required sum on loan notes of £25 at 4% interest. The purchase was completed in early 1881 (256) but the debt was not paid off for many years, and perhaps this was the beginning of the financial trouble which the Library began to experience later in the decade.

Some details of the Library can be gleaned from descriptions in 1881 (257) and 1885 (258). The income was £561 in 1880 and £608 in 1885. In 1880 315 volumes had been added to stock; in 1885 £119 was spent on books and £79 on newspapers and magazines. Issues in 1880 were 7,965 volumes and 4,770 periodicals; in 1885, 13,998 and 4,740. This suggests an improvement in membership and use. The Library was open every day except Sundays, Good Friday and Christmas Day, from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m.; the Newsroom from 8 a.m. - 10 p.m. The Librarian from at least 1861 to 1880 had been A. Haldane, who had been replaced by 1884 by J. Whitmarsh. The staff in 1885 consisted of the Librarian, who attended from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.; and a sub-librarian who lived in the building (this was William King who was sub-librarian from at least 1869 and died in March 1887. The post of sub-librarian probably evolved from the former post of porter, the duties of which were specified in the 1876 *Laws* as:

> "... the Porter shall remain in charge of the Library, and deliver or receive books, he keeping a correct account of them, and producing it to the Librarian on his next arrival."

This arrangement was probably of long standing; although the first Librarian himself occupied the rooms provided in the Library, by 1850 Jewitt was living in a private house.

In 1888 came the first report of financial trouble; it was not too serious, for by exercising the strictest economy the deficit for the year 1887 was less than £5, and this was mainly attributed to the cost of a new catalogue which cost £32 but realised only £4 in sales; the debt on 17 Cornwall St. was still £800 (259). Nevertheless the Committee was confident of the general soundness of their position. Book purchases had been maintained (272 volumes), the Librarian's salary was raised from £90 to £100, and a pension of £12 p.a. for five years was granted to William King's widow. Although some members had said publicly in previous years that they would leave the Proprietary Library and join the public library any such defection seems to have

had little effect.

A few letters written by the Librarian J. Whitmarsh have survived, in correspondence with one of the few more serious readers, Rev. Lawley who subscribed from Dartmouth (260). On 17 October 1892 he listed some of the latest purchases which would interest his reader:

> "Some of our latest purchases of books are:
> *Lancaster & York. A century of English History.*
> *History of the Verney Family.* 2 vols.
> *An Englishman in Paris.* 2 vols.
> *Twenty five years of St. Andrews*
> *History of St. Mary the Virgin Oxford*"

On 24 February 1893 Whitmarsh was evidently pleased:

> "This morning I received from Exeter a parcel on the opening of which I found a copy of *York* Historic Towns series by the Rev. I. Raine. On turning over the pages I found evidence of your very great kindness and consideration ...
>
> I had not been long in the Library this morning before I heard of the book, for two or three had read reviews of the work. I could announce with considerable pride that I was the possessor of the identical book"

In March, Whitmarsh wrote that he was enclosing very rough copies of the latest purchases made by the Committee, apparently lists marked in blue and red to indicate the books purchased. On 24 March the same year, he wrote more despondently:

> "My whole time in the Library is taken up with the issuing of magazines and novels. The work is too monotonous to be cheerful, and the literature too flimsy for retention. It is a relief to handle such books as you apply for"

The subjects of these books which he found a relief to handle were mainly church history, theology and travel. The references to the flimsy literature probably explains the division of stock into two categories apparently some time after 1881 but before 1887, for the report on 1887 refers to 6,560 issues from permanent stock and 6,753 from the provisional shelves, and 101 of the new volumes placed on the provisional shelves; the term provisional stock suggests ephemeral literature perhaps such as novels, but it did not appear to include magazines and reviews which were separately recorded issues (261). The Librarian Whitmarsh had been succeeded by J. Woodley by 1901, and no more firsthand evidence is available. Information about the Library from about 1890 to 1914 is scarce, but the glimpses which do

appear do not suggest that it suffered the sharp decline being experienced by the Cornwall County Library during this period (262). The hard core of proprietors evidently maintained their shares, and there were many subscribers. In 1897 there were 280 members (263), and in 1900 the Committee was confident enough to enlarge the building by a new wing (264). In 1901 the Library was described as having an issue total of 34,000 per annum and a stock of 45,000 volumes (265); the issue figure seems feasible, but the stock figure seems to be a misprint, for the stock did not exceed 20,000 in 1881 and was said then to have increased by 5,000 volumes in twenty years. The annual purchase of new volumes does not seem, from earlier evidence, to have exceeded 200 - 300, and a net gain of about 250 volumes per annum would bring the stock figure in 1901 to about 25,000. Another possible explanation is a totally different way of counting units particularly among the serials, in which case 45,000 could be the number of items including unbound serial parts.

The Library achieved its centenary in 1910, but was still operating under rules which had not been altered in essentials from the original ones of 1814 despite some modifications which have been noticed, and an amended version of the *Laws* printed in 1915 confirmed that this situation continued up to the terminal date of this study, 1914. The main change which affected members, apart from the increasing benefit of choice among the large and growing stock, was probably the relaxing of borrowing rules. There were in 1915 two levels of subscription: two gns. p.a. to have the right to take out ten volumes at a time and for three members of the subscriber's family over the age of fifteen to use the Reading Rooms; or, one guinea p.a. for the personal right to use the Library and Reading Rooms and to take out three volumes at a time. Proportional subscriptions for periods of three or six months were also allowed. It was much easier for people to join the Library, which had lost some of its exclusiveness in the attempt to remain financially viable, but proprietors had still to be admitted by the ballot of the Committee, although subscribers had only to be introduced by a member and approved by the Committee. To some extent, therefore the Library had been modified during the one hundred years of its history, but beneath surface changes it still retained the original principles which characterise proprietary libraries.

4.5 DEVONPORT CIVIL AND MILITARY LIBRARY

Devonport had experienced the benefits of the Library of the Dock Literary and Philosophical Society from 1808 to about 1821, and the loss of this facility seems to have been the one most regretted when the Society disbanded in about 1821. It was not long before an attempt was made to provide an even better facility. A meeting was held at the Townhall on 27 April 1824, following a public notice, to consider the proposal that the rapidly increasing population of Devonport and the Parish of Stoke Damerel "have long called for the establishment of a Public Library." (266) The meeting was under the chairmanship of William Foot, probably the former member of the Dock Literary and Philosophical Society of that name in 1816. The meeting passed several resolutions, to the following effect: subscriptions should be invited immediately for erecting a suitable building and establishing a Library and Newsroom to be called Devonport Public Library; shares should be £30; annual subscriptions 3 gns.; the management would be a General Committee consisting of a president, two vice-presidents, Treasurer, Secretary and sixteen members, elected annually by ballot; the General Committee at its first meeting should appoint a Special Committee of seven to select the books, which were to consist of the best modern editions and ultimately the ancient classic authors also, but excluding novels and books of an exclusively professional nature; as soon as one hundred proprietors had signed the lists in banks and stationers' shops the Chairman should convene the General Meeting to carry the Library into effect; thanks were given to Sir John St. Aubyn, Lord of the Manor, for his offer of a site, and a committee was set up to confer with Mr. Cole, his agent, about an eligible site. A second meeting was held on 4 May, which confirmed the resolutions of the first meeting (267).

The resolutions were effectively a copy of the arrangements which had been implemented with such success in Plymouth in 1810, but the first attempt seems to have failed at Devonport. Rowe recorded in 1825:

> "Since the breaking up of the literary and philosophical society, and the library connected with it, an attempt has been made to establish a public library; but we regret to say, that the scheme, which appeared very feasible, has been abandoned." (268)

The most likely reason for this failure is the price of the shares, which was quite high in comparison with prices of similar institutions elsewhere, for Kelly quotes Hull in 1817 at £20 and Leeds 1822 at £21 as being high (269). In Plymouth in 1810 shares had been taken up rapidly at £30, but this had been by the civilian professional and mercantile middle class in a period of affluence. At Devonport, not only was there the decline in prosperity which occurred when the country was not at war, but in any case the comparable civilian middle class element was very much smaller. One in two of the male population over 20 years old was involved in either the Navy, Army or Royal Marines, and it is doubtful whether an expensive share, although an investment and piece of property, would prove attractive to officers liable to have to move elsewhere; annual subscriptions would seem much more reasonable for those who wished to read. Despite the setback at the first attempt to found a public library, the scheme was evidently soon revived and put forward in a revised form, in which the shares were reduced to twenty guineas and the annual subscription to two guineas (270). Even then, the take-up was slow, and the number of shareholders had reached only about 75 in March 1827 (271); the Library was formally established in that year (272) with only about eighty members (273) instead of the target one hundred proprietors.

The unfortunate delay in the establishment of the Library does seem to have been fortunate in another respect, for originally it had been intended to build a library, and the Lord of the Manor had offered the site for it, but in the interim which had elapsed before the establishment of the Library a new building came onto the market. This was the former Devonport & Stonehouse Classical and Mathematical Subscription School building, erected in 1823 on a site adjacent to the Zion Chapel and the Townhall, and designed by John Foulston in the Egyptian style (Fig. 19). It was purchased by the Library and was readily adapted to its purpose. Fig. 20 shows the plan, with its newsroom, committee room and "keeper's room" on the ground floor, and the library occupying the whole of the first floor (274).

The arrangements for the Library appear to have proceeded according to the original plan. A Committee was elected, consisting of the President, Vice-Presidents, Treasurer, Secretary, and fifteen members, who were elected in the annual general meetings held in

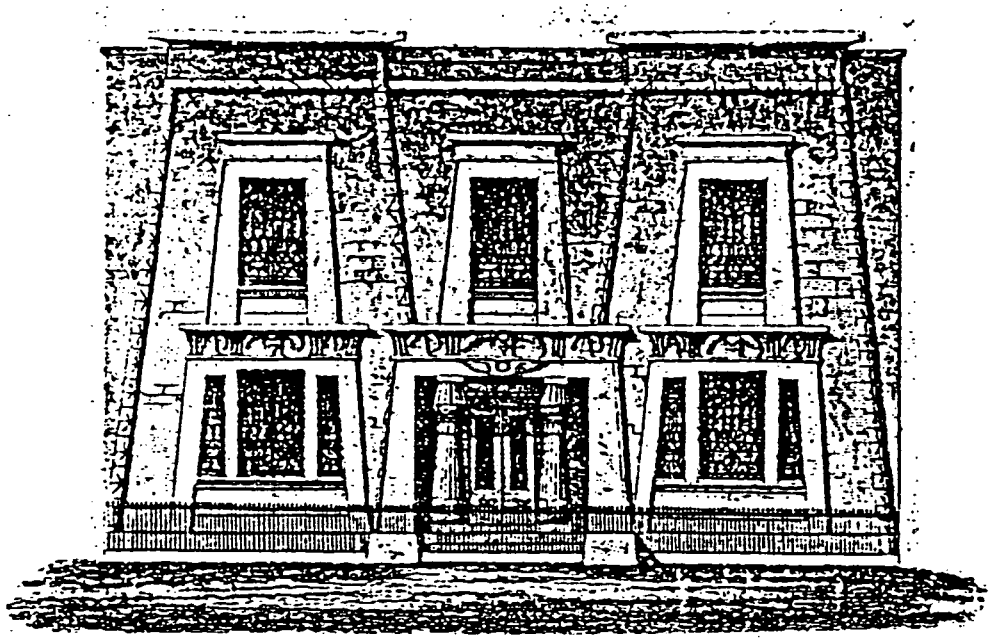


Figure 19. Devonport Civil and Military Library.

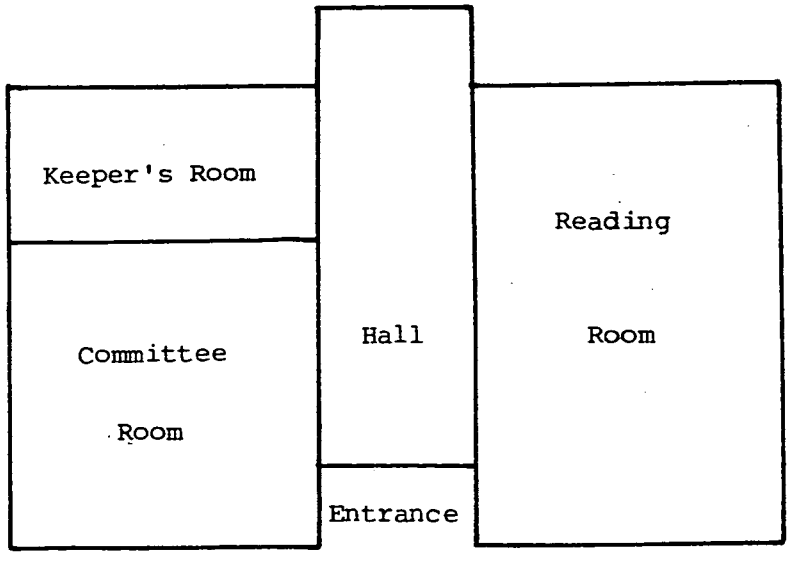


Figure 20. Devonport Civil and Military Library. Sketch plan of ground floor. Not to scale.

September (275). The directories list the Librarian after the Secretary, but this must be interpreted not as an elected member of the Committee but as a paid official. The patron and President of the Library was, as to be expected, Sir John St. Aubyn; the two Vice-Presidents were W. Foot and J. Coles, both of whom were probably the gentlemen of the same names listed in the 1816 membership of the Dock Literary and Philosophical Society, so perhaps former members of the old Society had played leading roles in the establishment of the new Library.

The original name of the Library was Devonport Public Library, or Devonport Public Library and Newsroom. This was changed in 1830 to the Devonport Civil and Military Library, an unusual designation but one which is explained by the union in 1830 of the Garrison Library which was formerly in Plymouth Citadel (276). Unfortunately no details have been found of this interesting merger, or why the merger was made with the new library at Devonport instead of the well-established one at Plymouth; it was probably connected in some way with the movement of troops which resulted in the greater concentration of forces in the seat of military government which had been transferred from Plymouth to Devonport many years previously. As a consequence of the merger, the Devonport Public Library changed its name, and provision was made in the rules of the institution for the admission, as members, of

> " ... all military officers belonging to the Garrison; retired officers of the Army, not permanently residing in the Three Towns or neighbourhood; and the General in command of the district as an honorary member " (277)

The categories of membership and subscription rates in 1836 (278) were:

Proprietors	£3. 3. 0. p.a.
Military members	£2. 2. 0. p.a. or 3. 6. monthly
Subscribers to Library and Newsroom	£3. 3. 0. p.a.
Subscribers to Library alone	£2. 2. 0. p.a.
Subscribers to Newsroom alone	£1. 1. 0. p.a.

Every proprietor and military member had the privilege of introducing a friend who could have free access for three months (279).

The original Library proposals had provided for a special sub-committee to select the books, and had laid down a broad selection policy, viz. that the stock was to consist of the best modern works,

and ultimately of the classics also, and that novels and exclusively professional literature were to be excluded. It seems that these principles were adhered to. Within fifteen years of its establishment the Library had grown to over 4,000 volumes, described in various directories and guidebooks as:

> " ... consisting of the most valuable books, both ancient and modern; ..." (280)
>
> "The collection of books is extensive, and the managing Committee have most judiciously appropriated their funds to the purchase of works of real value and standard character; studiously excluding all productions of more ephemeral interest, with which the shelves of public libraries are too often filled, to the exclusion of worth and excellence." (281)

A catalogue was published in 1828 (282) but no copy has been located. The Newsroom was "well supplied with newspapers and periodicals" (283) and had "a constant supply of the London and provincial papers" (284). In addition to the stock of literature, the Library had acquired before 1843 a valuable mineral collection, the gift of their patron Sir John St. Aubyn, although it was many years and in another context that these were displayed to the public (285).

In 1855 the rules of the Library were revised, and the new version was printed in 1856 (286); a copy has fortunately survived, from which a picture of the institution can be reconstructed. It seems to have been very similar to other proprietary libraries. The Committee had the power to elect new proprietors by ballot, and the price of shares was still 20 gns. The property was vested in nine trustees. Only the proprietors had the right to attend business meetings and vote; and each proprietor had only one vote, whatever number of shares he held; (in 1855 there were only 46 proprietors, and the original number of shares was eighty, so it is likely that several proprietors held more than one share, and possibly some had reverted to the Library for disposal by the Committee). The rules provided for lady proprietors to vote by proxy, but in 1855 there were no ladies on the list of proprietors. Subscription rates had fallen quite considerably from the 1836 levels. Subscribers to the Library and Newsroom paid only 1 gn. per annum, temporary residents were admitted at 5s. 6d. per quarter, and military officers in the Garrison were entitled to become members on payment of 2s. per month. The General in command of the district continued to be an honorary member. A higher subscription of £1. 11. 6. was required from proprietors. Non-members

could be introduced by proprietors to use the Library for reference, and there were apparently reciprocal arrangements which allowed members of the Devon Exeter Institution, the Plymouth Proprietary Library, and the Tavistock Subscription Library, to use the Library for reference

The Committee decided which books, papers and periodicals should be purchased, and no rare or expensive book could be borrowed without the Committee's permission. The Library was open every day except Sundays, Christmas Day and Good Friday, from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m., and the Librarian was on duty from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. to issue and receive books. The Newsroom was open for the same hours, plus 8.30 p.m. to 10 p.m. on Sundays, Christmas Day and Good Friday. Borrowers were normally allowed only two works, not exceeding four volumes, at a time; and the time for keeping books was marked on the inside of the cover of each volume. All books added to the Library in the previous six months were considered to be "new books", and fines of 2d. per day per volume were charged for keeping these volumes beyond the due date; older books could be kept without penalty unless recalled for the use of other borrowers. The Librarian seems to have escaped the task of collecting fines, for he had to provide a list of fines to each quarterly meeting of the Committee, which was transmitted to the Treasurer for collection. "Country proprietors" were not defined, but were allowed extra books and could keep them longer. The Librarian kept an issue record in a ledger, and also a reservation list. He must have produced some form of catalogue, but although the 1855 rules provide for printed copies of the catalogue being sold to proprietors and subscribers, no copies have survived. Even in 1901 the lack of such records from this Library was noted:

> "There does not appear to be any printed or MSS catalogue of this Library, or indeed any printed record whatever of its proceedings." (286)

The Library seems to have had only two Librarians in its thirty-eight or so years of existence. The first Librarian was named in 1828 at J. Hore (287), T. Hore in 1830 (288) which was probably a misprint for another directory of the same date quoted J. Hore (289), and J. Hore again in 1837 (290). The next edition of the same directory was published at an uncertain date between 1837 and 1840, and quotes C. V. Hoare (291), but the 1843 edition shows C. McQuillan (292), whose name occurs, without any variation of spelling or initials, until

1864-5 (293).

The reason for the dissolution of the Library in about 1865 is not known, although the obvious assumption must be that it had been failing to attract sufficient financial support to enable it to remain viable. There is a hint that the failure had begun several years earlier, for in 1853 a newspaper records the exertions of the Devonport Civil & Military Library to "place this Institution in a position commensurate with the requirements of its members, and the increasing population of the borough" (294), by reducing the subscription to 1 gn. for the use of the Library of over 6,000 volumes and the newsroom; this had led to new members and subscribers, according to the same source. This was unfortunately not sustained, and the reasons seem obvious. It has already been pointed out that the civilian middle-class population of Devonport was neither as numerous or various as in Plymouth, and was consequently not strong enough to make good the inevitable erosion of Library resources. The Army and Navy had their own library provision from about 1840, which was further reinforced by the Army in about 1862 (vid. inf. Chapter 10), so the support from officers seems likely to have dwindled. The growth of the Mechanics' Institute and its Library, which had originally been intended for the working class, had long been taken over by the middle class in Devonport, and the Library had been particularly enlarged in the late 1840s by popular literature, which probably was providing effective competition and caused the Devonport Civil & Military Library to have its recruitment drive in 1853. It was to the Devonport Mechanics' Institution that the Library handed over its stock when it finally became clear that the Library could not continue. Proprietors became life members of the Mechanics' Institute. The precise date of hand-over is not clear, but it appears to have been in about 1865, for in 1864-5 the Library was still at its address of 3 Ker St., but in 1867 the premises had already been converted into the Oddfellows Hall (295).

CHAPTER FIVE. LITERARY AND PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY LIBRARIES.

The establishment of the Royal Society in 1660 and the development of the other great learned societies in pursuit of the advancement of knowledge was followed in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries by the growth of local societies in pursuit of learning, particularly in "natural philosophy" or science. Some of the societies specialised on a particular subject such as archaeology, and others were of a more general character, covering literary, historical and scientific interests. The methods adopted by the societies to pursue their aims usually included regular lecture programmes, and the establishment of a library and possibly a museum to support their investigations and display their findings. Kelly mentions some examples of early small societies established between about 1750 and 1780 (1), but the real landmark in the history of literary and philosophical societies was the formation of Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society in 1781. It was formed by the merger of small bookclubs and societies, and its early success made it the precedent which was followed by many others, notably Newcastle 1793, Warrington 1811, and Liverpool and *Plymouth* in 1812. Yet, although the Plymouth Institution founded in 1812 is rightly eminent amongst similar societies, it was not the first to be established in the Three Towns. It had been forestalled, for once, by Devonport where the Dock Literary and Philosophical Society was established in 1808, but foundered in about 1821. Thus the Three Towns can boast of two of the earliest literary and philosophical societies, of which one still survives under the name Plymouth Athenaeum. The two societies were not only early in the general history of this type of society, but they were the first to be established in Devon and Cornwall. The Devon and Exeter Institution was not established until 1813, the Royal Institution of Cornwall was formed in 1818, and the main spread of literary and philosophical societies in the smaller towns took place much later, such as Dartmouth 1832 (2), Barnstaple 1845 (3), Modbury 1840 (4), and many others around the middle of the century.

5.1 DOCK LITERARY AND PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

The settlement at Dock which had grown rapidly in the late eighteenth-century soon began to acquire the social amenities desired by the middle class element of society. The Dock Literary and Philosophical Society was founded in July 1808 to form a social focus with serious objectives, for the objects of the Society were: the reading and discussion of essays on subjects connected with literature, philosophy and the fine arts; the formation of a library; and a collection of philosophical apparatus (5). At first the meetings were held in a hired room, but before 1816 the Society had acquired a site and erected its own building in Fore St.; this building and the library were vested in Trustees (6).

Fortunately a copy of the *Rules and regulations* printed in 1816 has survived from which a picture of the Society emerges, for there is little other evidence about it. The Society was managed by a Committee consisting of the Officers (President, two Vice-Presidents, Treasurer, Vice-Treasurer and Secretary) and six members, all of whom were elected annually at the January meeting. The Committee was empowered to "make new Regulations or to decide on any new case", and although the quorum was set at five out of the twelve, members were expected to attend regularly and were deemed to have vacated their seats if absent without a written just plea from the first meeting or any three successive meetings.

There were three categories of membership, Members, Honorary Members, and Subscribers. Evidently the Members were proprietors, although no indication is given about the price of shares. Ladies were eligible as Members or Subscribers, "and shall be excused from attendance at the meetings" (there were four lady Members and three lady Subscribers in 1816). The total membership in 1816 was quite healthy, with 40 Members, 91 Subscribers, and the patron, Sir John St. Aubyn, Lord of the Manor, was presumably an Honorary Member. The Subscribers included nine Army and Navy officers, and the wife of the local military commander, General Nelson, was a Member.

The admission of Members and Honorary Members was by ballot after due proposal and seconding at a regular meeting; black balls from

one quarter of the Members present excluded the candidate, and the quorum for elections was eleven. The Members met on the second Friday of each month to transact business, and their subscriptions of 12s. per quarter were paid at the quarterly meetings in January, April, July and October. Fines of 1s. and 2s. 6d. were exacted for absence, without just written plea, from a General (January) or Quarterly meeting or three successive (weekly) meetings. Subscribers were subject to much less stringent rules; admission was by a simple majority ballot by the Committee or Members present at a regular meeting, and the subscription was 6s. 6d. per quarter. For this sum, the Subscriber was entitled to attend the lectures and borrow books from the Library, but had no say in the management of the Society and did not attend the meetings.

During the winter months the Members met weekly, or as the Committee decided, to hear lectures or discussions on literary or scientific subjects and to receive original papers and communications. Members were apparently expected to provide at least the bulk of the lectures, and had to give the Committee notice of their subjects and numbers of proposed lectures one month before the Session began, so that the Committee could arrange the programme. The Lecturer and Committee together decided whether to extend admission beyond the Members and Subscribers; and if Strangers were admitted it was by ticket (six tickets to the Lecturer, two each to Members and Subscribers). Tickets were transferable only to a limited extent, but arrangements for non-resident Members of similar societies to obtain tickets from the Secretary.

The lectures might be illustrated by scientific apparatus which could be purchased, subject to the Members' agreement, out of a special fund. The fund consisted of 8s. per annum from each Member's subscription and 5s. per annum from each Subscriber's subscription, which operated until the fund reached £15; after which the deductions of 8s. and 5s. were appropriated to the Library, until the apparatus fund had been spent and had to be replenished.

The Library was evidently considered to be a substantial benefit to the Members and Subscribers, although its stock must have built up slowly and had reached less than 900 volumes in 1816 (vid. inf.). The bookfund was apparently determined by the appropriation method just

described, although it is possible that extra sums were allocated from time to time. The Members and Subscribers could propose new titles, and each item recommended for purchase was ballotted on at the business meetings of Members. Books which failed the ballot could not be proposed again for six months, and similarly any failed proposal to discontinue a periodical could not be renewed for six months. Not only were books purchased, but they were also donated (and recorded in a special register) and loaned to the Library by the Members. The usual rules applied for financial compensation by the borrower for the loss of damage of books in his possession, and in default of the required compensation the reader would be expelled from the Society.

The Librarian's position is not stated in the *Rules and regulations*, and he was not an officer of the Committee although there is no evidence that he was a paid employee who would have been ineligible to be a Committee member. The Librarian in 1816 was Mr. James Lancaster, and a J. Lancaster appears on the list of Members; probably this was an honorary post, although the commitment would have been timeconsuming. The Library was open on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday evenings from 6.30 - 9 p.m. from Michaelmas to Lady Day, and 7 - 9.30 p.m. during the rest of the year. Each of these three days on which the Library was open was called a "Library Day", and many of the rules hinged upon these library days. The number of Library Days allowed for reading a book was marked on the cover. Overdue charges of 3d. per Library Day were exacted, although renewals were permitted if the work was not required by another reader. Readers living more than one mile from Dock were allowed an extension, and were also permitted to take more than one set of books at a time. Reviews and periodicals were not allowed out of the Library for six Library Days after their arrival.

The printed *Catalogue of the Library* 1816 (7) is a 32-page alphabetical listing of authors and keyword titles, representing in it 688 entries about 414 works and 868 volumes of books, plus five periodicals for which volume holdings are not specified (*Annals of philosophy, Edinburgh review, Monthly review, Nautical ephemeris,* and *Philosophical magazine).* Most works were entered both by author and keyword of title although the latter was not always observed; in all cases the format was given, plus the number of volumes (Fig. 21). The importance of format suggests that the works were shelved by size,

Circle of the Sciences	1 vo.. 8vo
Clarendon's History of the Rebellion	5 vols. 8vo
Clarkson's Abolition of the Slave Trade ..	2 vols. 8vo
Classics, Historical and Military, ...	8 vols. 8vo
Celebs in search of a wife, ...	2 vols. 8vo
Collection of Voyages and Travels, by Kerr	16 vols 8vo
——————————by Pinkerton	5 vols. 4to
Collins's Poems, ...	1 vol. 12mo
Collyer's Lectures on Scripture facts, ...	1 vol. 8vo
——— ——— on Prophecy, ...	1 vol. 8vo
Colman's Broad Grins	1 vol. 8vo
Contes Moraux, par Marmontel, ...	2 vols. 12mo
Corsair, (Lord Byron,)	1 vol. 8vo
Cottle's Poems, ...	2 vols. 12mo
Cowper, (Haley's life of)	4 vols. 8vo
Cowper's Homer	4 vols. 8vo
Cowper's Poems, ...	2 vols. 8vo
Crabbe's Tales	2 vols. 8vo
Creation, a Poem, by Blackmore	1 vol. 12mo
Critical Review, 1756, to 1789, ...	4 vols. 8vo
Crystallography, (Accum's)	1 vol. 8vo
Cuthbertson's Electricity	1 vol. 8vo
Chambers Dictionary of Arts and Sciences,	2 vols. folio
Cicero's Essays, ...	1 vol 12mo
Clarkson's Quakerism, ...	3 vols. 8vo
———Slave trade, ...	2 vols. 8vo
Calamities of Authors, ...	2 vols. 8vo
Churchill's life of Lord Nelson, ...	1 vol. 4to

Fig. 21 Dock Literary and Philosophical Society Library.
Extract from *Catalogue*, 1816.

which was not an unusual practice at this time. About 75% were 8^{o}, 19% 12^{mo}, 5 % 4^{o}, and 1% 18^{mo} or smaller. No clue is given to the subarrangement of the books, which covered a wide subject scope ; they might have been arranged alphabetically within size groups, or arranged broadly in subject groups. Voyages and travel, history, geography, biography and literature were well represented, but theological works were conspicuously absent. Astronomy, geology, chemistry and physics were represented, but the only mathematical book in the catalogue was a mathematical dictionary. Some military and maritime flavour appeared in the biographies. Works were in English with very few exceptions, three French works (on French history and on hydraulics), a 1530 Italian work, and possibly a few Latin and Greek classics although usually it is clear that the small selection of classics was in translation. The selection of English literature included Shakespeare but little other drama, the poems of Milton, Byron, Cowper and Pope, and the early novels such as *Peregrine Pickle* and the *Mysteries of Udolpho*. Italic type in the *Catalogue* distinguished those works which were not to be taken out of the Library without permission from the Committee. These proved to be a motley collection of eleven works, including Buffon's *Natural history, Philosophy of medicine,* Cicero's *Essays,* and volumes of plates. On the other hand, it seems that *Encyclopaedia Britannica,* various dictionaries, and the few pre-1600 publications could be borrowed at will; this was apparently allowed because the Library had no reading room facility, being open only during the specified hours on Library Days for the purpose of borrowing and limited consultation. This 1816 *Catalogue* was issued interleaved for the addition of new works, and Members were advised to send their copies to the Library occasionally for updating, although it is not clear by whom. Perhaps the Society paid some-one to act as caretaker and library clerk on a part-time basis, although funds to do so must have been very limited.

The reason for the decline and break-up of the Society and its Library are not clear. In early 1819 the Society was proposing to add a subscription newsroom to its building (8), which does not suggest that it was then in decline. In a guidebook published in 1821 there is a clue in that there was a problem over its constitution:

> "We learn with great regret, that this society is generally considered in a declining state; and this will doubtless be

> the feeling of every friend of science. As it is our earnest wish, that every institution which has for its object the increase of knowledge, may be attended with success, we trust that such judicious alterations in its constitution, as may be deemed essential to its stability, will be adopted by the members, and that renewed vigour will be the desirable result of timely correction." (9)

Hunt stated in 1901 that the Society continued until 1821, but although this is undoubtedly roughly the right year, it is not known precisely when the Society disbanded (10).

According to the provision in the Society's *Rules and regulations* the Society could not be dissolved except by the overwhelming majority of seven-eighths of its Members, upon which the property "shall be divided in proportion to the Subscriptions of the remaining Members." This was presumably achieved, for in 1825 Rowe wrote that :

> "Since the breaking up of the Literary and Philosophical Society and the Library connected with it, an attempt has been made to establish a public library: but ... the scheme ... has been abandoned." (11)

This certainly suggests that the break-up had occurred at least two or three years ago, and that the Library was the facility which left the most-felt vacuum in the intellectual life of Devonport. It seems possible that part of the cause for the break-up was the constant requirement upon the Members to participate in a frequent lecture programme and discussions, which after more than twelve years had probably little new to contribute from local membership. Certainly some of the Members of the Dock Literary and Philosophical Society were prepared to be active participants in the moves shortly set in motion for both the Mechanics' Institute and the Devonport Public Library.

5.2 THE PLYMOUTH INSTITUTION

The literary and scientific awakening of Plymouth marked by the establishment of the Plymouth Institution in 1812 had not come about without warning. Faint stirrings can be seen even in the latter half of the eighteenth-century when the fever of local naval and military war preparations were at their height. The quasi-literary Otter Club and the blossoming of bookshops and libraries has already been mentioned, and these were accompanied by the stimulation of local interest in pure and applied science; examples include the discovery of the Stonehouse Caves in 1776, the unsuccessful experiment of Day's diving bell in 1774, the round-the-world voyages of Captain Cook which departed from and terminated at Plymouth, and the engineering feat of John Smeaton's Eddystone Lighthouse which was completed in 1759. These and other matters must have been the subject of considerable interest amongst the more erudite townsfolk, and it appears that from time to time public lectures were given on scientific (and possibly literary) subjects in the old Theatre at Frankfort Gate. Both John Harris (12) and Henry Woollcombe (13) mention a series of lectures on astronomy by Mr. Lloyd in 1796, and the references by both diarists are couched in terms which suggest that this type of event was by no means unique although of sufficient importance to merit a special note in their respective records. In 1810 Henry Woollcombe mentions another lecture, on electricity, by Mr. Webster (14). The formation of a society which devoted itself to primarily scientific lectures and research does not come as a surprise, but it required particular initiative to bring about its establishment at a time when national affairs and major civic issues dominated local public attention. This initiative was provided by Henry Woollcombe, a solicitor by profession, and a prominent person who was Mayor in 1813. He was the author of the first Plymouth guidebook, a fact which was common knowledge among his contemporaries although his name did not appear on the publication. He was also the founder of an informal small group of influential local men who met together to discuss ways in which the general amenities of Plymouth could be improved and then tried to put their ideas into practice, resulting in such benefits as the Public Dispensary, the Public School, etc. Probably Woollcombe had the idea of a lecture society in mind for some years before its actual establishment, for while he was studying in London or visiting it on professional business he became acquainted with its learned societies

and libraries. He was particularly familiar with the Royal Institution, and in 1805 he recorded in his diary, in ethusiastic terms, the lectures he had attended there and the facilities of its library, which he used (15). There are close similarities between the Royal Institution and the provincial organisation which was to become known as the Plymouth Institution. The Royal Institution of Great Britain was established in 1799, and its purpose was "the promotion of science and the diffusion and extension of useful knowledge", which it set about achieving by the twin methods of research carried out in its laboratories and the provision of lectures of a high standard accompanied by scientific demonstrations; a library was established soon after its foundation to support its work(16). On Woollcombe's return to Plymouth he was at first preoccupied by other schemes for civic and social improvement, but on 3 October 1812 he invited a few gentlemen to his house to discuss the formation of a society which would hold lectures on the various branches of science (17). The proposal was well received, and on 17 October it was resolved to establish "the Plymouth Institute" "for the purpose of delivering lectures on scientific as well as other subjects during the ensuing winter." (18) The membership was not to exceed thirty, meetings were to be held each fortnight at the house of each member in rotation, and four presidents were appointed. Perhaps the private accommodation was inadequate, for the meetings were soon relocated, first in the Public Dispensary (19), then to the Committee Room of Plymouth Public (Proprietary) Library (20), then again to the Fine Art Gallery in Frankfort St., in which the first Art Exhibition was held in August 1815, which became an annual event (21).

In November 1814 there occurred an unfortunate incident which casts some light on the high social standing of the members of the Plymouth Institution, as the society had become known. George Harvey was a man of particular scientific and mathematical ability who came from the upper ranks of the working class; he had been a Dockyard mechanic, and was later destined to play a key part in the foundation of the local mechanics' institutes; he eventuallly became an F.R.S. of London and Edinburgh, and in 1834 was appointed Professor of Mathematics at the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich (22). It was this man who was proposed as a member of the Plymouth Institution, but proved socially unacceptable to some members and failed to be elected. This led to the temporary withdrawal of some of the more liberally minded members, but they rejoined in 1816 when the Plymouth Institution was dissolved and reformed ,

presumably under more liberal arrangements and with George Harvey as a member, although this is not known. It seems likely that it was at this time that the limitation of thirty on the number of members ceased, for by 1818-9 there were 37 Members and 51 Extraordinary Members (later to be known as Associates) (24). Almost immediately the Institution planned to erect its own building, the Athenaeum, to provide the space needed for their meetings and also for the library and museum which were intended. The architect John Foulston was one of the founder members, and he designed the building and supervised the work without charge. The building was on a site adjacent to the Theatre Royal (Fig. 22) and was opened on 4 February 1819. The Athenaeum, built in the Doric style, contained a vestibule, porter's lodge and lecture room, with the library in a room over the vestibule and porter's lodge which later became known as the Committee Room. In 1828 the Museum was added to complete the building which was then in plan as shown in Fig. 23 . The well proportioned lecture hall was decorated by casts of classical figures, and the building was distinguished by being the first in Plymouth to contain sculpture and fine art (Fig.24).

From the beginning the lecture programmes had a serious scientific bent. The first lectures held in 1812-3 were on the following subjects: pneumatics; hydrostatics; observations on the causes of bars being formed at the mouths of rivers in the counties of Devon and Cornwall; architecture (two lectures); the physiology of plants and animals (two lectures); the history of chemistry; caloric; electricity; galvanism; and the origin, characteristics and constituents of poetry (25). In this first year, therefore, the papers were 90% science and 10% literature; thereafter the percentage of lectures on science declined, with 59% in the first decade, 48% in the second decade, and 41% in the third decade (26). Literary subjects with occasional fine art lectures increased proportionately. Ladies were not admitted to these erudite gatherings, at which the lecture was not to exceed one hour, leaving two hours for fierce academic debate. Apparatus was purchased by the Institution for use by the members in their research and lecture demonstrations. Plymouth must have been a provincial echo of the Royal Institution, for many of the early members were notable in their fields, such as Jonathan Hearder the blind chemist, and William Snow Harris who conducted electrical experiments at the Athenaeum using its apparatus (27). The scientific reputation of the Plymouth Institution was high in the

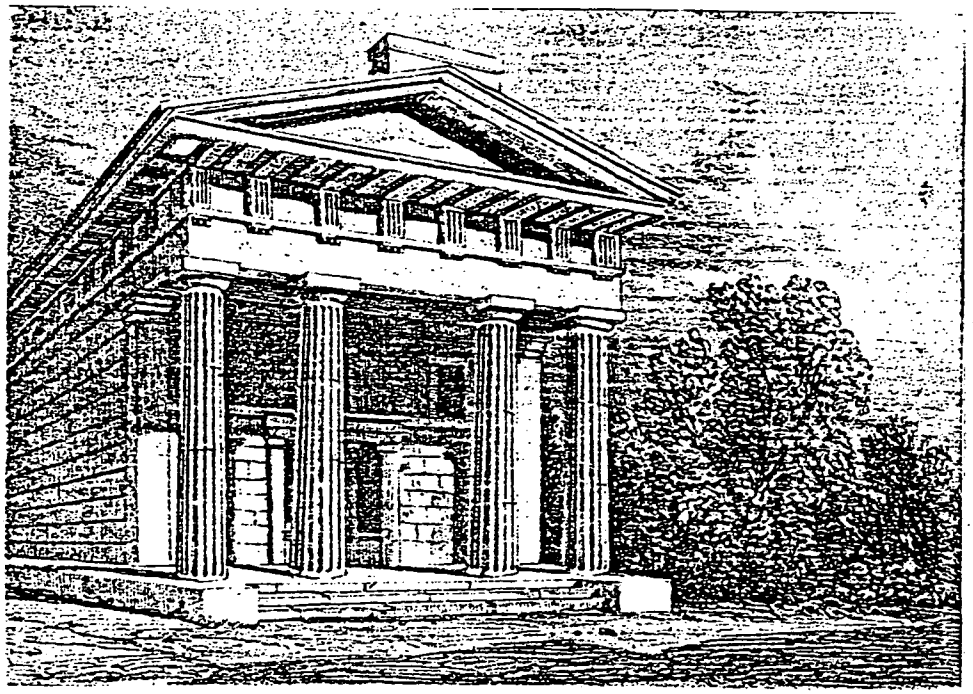
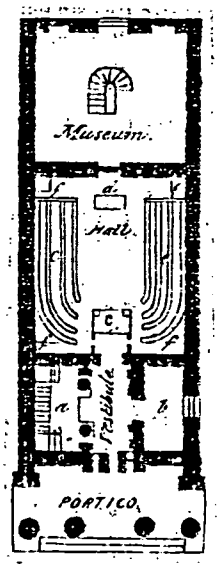


Fig. 22 Plymouth Institution. The Athenaeum.

a Staircase

b Porter's Lodge

Library over Vestibule and Porter's Lodge



c President's chair

d Lecturer's table

e Seats

f Statues

Laboratory and offices under the Museum

Fig. 23. Plymouth Institution. Plan of the Athenaeum.

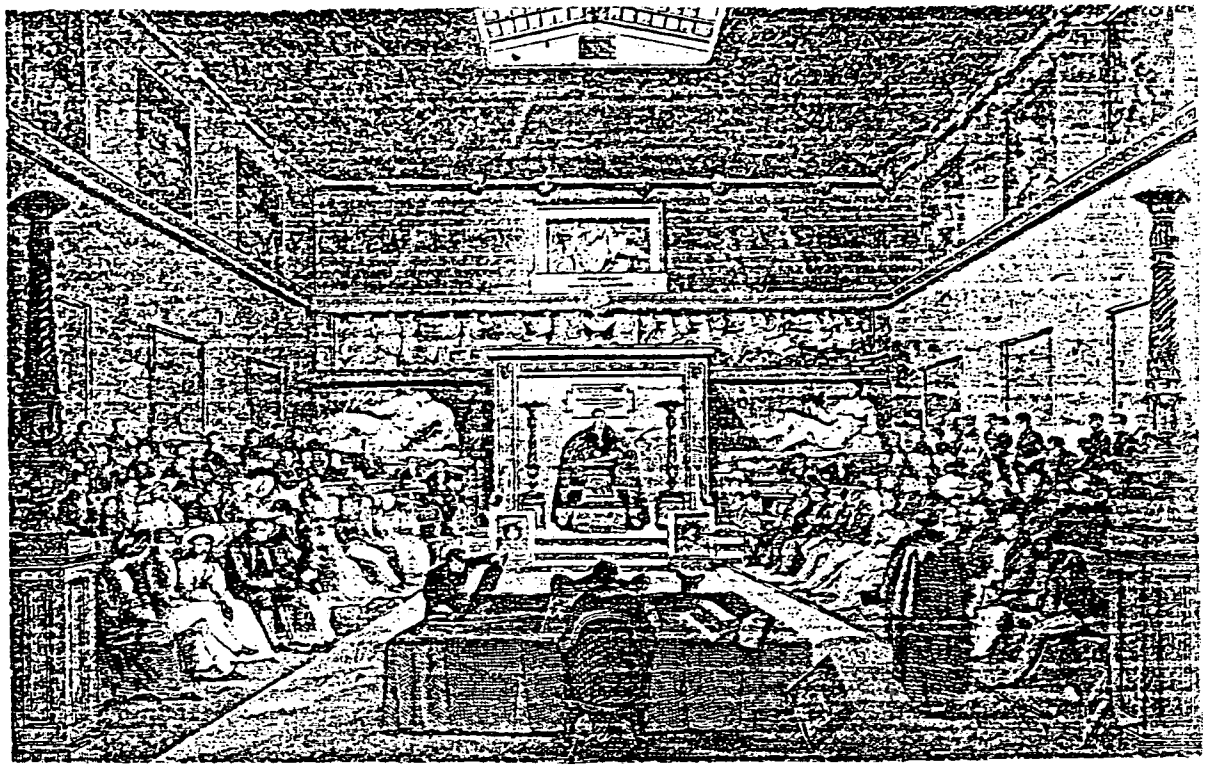


Fig. 24 Plymouth Institution. Lecture room in the Athenaeum.

early years, and it was seen as very appropriate when the British Association met at Plymouth and made the Athenaeum their head-quarters for the event (28).

The formation of a library probably began before the Athenaeum was built, but the earliest reference to its actual existence seems to be in 1825, when a guidebook merely noted that "This apartment contains the library of the Institution" (29) in an otherwise legnthy description, which suggests that the collection was probably still very small and comparatively insignificant. The Curator of the Library in 1825 was W. Woollcombe (30), and in 1828 it was Henry Woollcombe (31), but from 1833 onwards the names of the annually elected Curators are known (Table 18). In 1830 both the Library and scientific apparatus were being kept in the Committee Room, and the Library had already accumulated a useful collection of about 700 volumes, many of them donations (32). Purchases were restricted to works which would "assist members in their researches, and especially in the preparation of lectures". (33) A list of the principal works was published in 1830 and is reproduced in Table 19; it illustrates the serious scientific emphasis although works on art and literature were not excluded and Northcote's donations of his prints were a source of pride to the Institution. The list of periodicals is quite extensive and consists largely of English and French learned journals but did not ignore the more humble *Mechanics magazine*. It is certain that this library was very different from any which had yet been established in the Three Towns, and it probably continued to have the best local collection of scientific materials until its destruction in 1941; in order to understand its growth and administration it is necessary to turn back to the general development of its parent Institution.

The acquisition of a site and erection of a building had been made possible by the generosity of various members who provided loans (35) which were finally paid off in 1858 (36). The running costs were met by the subscriptions from the members who were divided into different categories. The earliest surviving set of *Laws* was printed in 1827 (37) and provides much information about the organisation. There were four categories of membership, of which the most important was Member, consisting of gentlemen who undertook to lecture; they alone owned the property of the Institution, had the privilege of electing members,

Table 18. Curators of the Library, and Honorary Librarians, of the Plymouth Institution, 1812 - 1914

pre- 1825	not known
1825	W. Woollcombe
1828	H. Woollcombe
1829-30(?)	Rev. R. Luney
1830	Rev. S. Rowe
1833-34	Rev. S. Rowe
1834-36	Rev. B. St. John
1836	Lieut. Col. Smith
1836-37	C. Brown
1837-41	Rev. G. Patey
1841-42	A. Rooker
1842-44	Rev. P. Holmes
1844-46	Rev. G. H. Parminter
1846-47	Dr. Soltau
1847-50	A. Rooker
1850-51	A. Norman
1851-53	R. F. Weymouth, M.A.
1853-54	J. Boswarva
1854-55	W. Hunt
1855-64	R. Bishop
1864-68	E. Gasking Brown
1868-69	Dr. Bikkers
1883-84	W. Power
1884-99*	J. Brooking Rowe
1899-1902	W. H. K. Wright
1902-10	J. Davy Turner
1910-13	C. W. Bracken
1913-	A. L. Strachan

* The title was changed from Curator of the Library to Honorary Librarian in 1888.

Sources of information: the *Annual reports* of the Plymouth Institution.

Table 19. Plymouth Institution Library: principal works 1830.

"Astle's origin and progress of writing and printing. -4to.
Atlantic Neptune, by Col. des Barres.
Aulus Gellius. - folio.
Acta eruditorum. -4to.
Brunet Manuel de Libraire.
Bryant's dictionary of painters.
Cowley's works. -folio.
Cuvier's Animal kingdom, translated by Griffiths and others.
Cuvier's Lecons d'Anatomie comparee.
Casauboni Athenaeus. -folio.
Ducauge, Glossarium. -folio.
Delphin classics. - (Valpy's edition.)
Dictionnaire, Noveau d'histoire naturelle.
Greenough's geology.
Homeri Carmina. Heyne.
Hallam's history of the middle ages.
Leslie on heat and moisture.
Lanzi Storia pittorica della Italia.
Lagrange Theorie des Fonctions analytiques.
Laplace Theorie analytique des probabilites
Londiniana, or Reminiscences of the British capital, by E.W. Brayley.
Lamark, Animaux sans Vertebres.
Muratori Annali d'Italia.
Muller's universal history.
Maskelyne's astronomical observations.
Moh's mineralogy.
Maculloch's classification of rocks.
Northcote's life of Reynolds.
Northcote's prints, from his pictures. - large folio.
Normandy, architectural antiquities of, by Pagin and Le Keux.
Sismondi Historie de Republiques Italiennes.
Spurzheim's physiognomical system.
Stephani Thesaurus Linguae Latinae.
Scapulae Lexicon. - (Valpy) - folio.
Syriae Historia Regum per Foy Vaillant.
Tiraboschi Storia della Letteratura Italiana.
Tower of London, memoirs of, by John Britton and E. W. Brayley.
Warton's history of English poetry.
Wightwick's views of Rome.

Also the following periodicals.

Transactions of the Royal Society of London - of Edinburgh - of the Cambridge Philosophical Society - of the Royal Society of Literature - of the Asiatic Society of Calcutta. Repertory of Arts. Annals of Philosophy. Edinburgh Journal of Science. Philosophical Magazine. Mechanic's Magazine. Journals des Savans. Le Globe. Annales de Chimie. Oxford and Cambridge University Calendars, &c."

(From *Transactions of the Plymouth Institution*, 1, 1830, 356-7)

managed the Institution, and had the right to use the Library. Associates were non-lecturing members whose only privilege was to attend lectures and participate in the debates. Honorary members were gentlemen who had distinguished themselves in science, literature or fine arts; and Corresponding members were gentlemen who lived at a distance and who passed on valuable literary or scientific communications - or could be expected to do so. In each category admission was only by election by the Members. Members paid an entrance fee of 2 gns., and 1½ gns. annually thereafter, while Associates had to pay the higher subscription of 2 gns. per annum. Members had the right to introduce a young member aged between fifteen and twenty for a supplementary 1 gn. per annum, and could introduce a stranger, viz. someone not resident within ten miles radius, to the lectures. From 1827-8 the Institution was governed by a Committee consisting of the President (elected every five years), three Vice-Presidents, Treasurer, Secretary, and Curators, all of whom were elected annually. The Committee arranged lectures, supervised publications, and decided upon the purchase of books and apparatus, etc. The four Curators were introduced in about 1827 to replace a former Scientific Apparatus Committee (38), and were responsible for the care of the Library, Museum, apparatus, and domestic concerns. The Curator of the Library was an honorary post, often held by one of the most eminent Members, and its duties were laid down in the *Laws*, which showed them to be specific and limited. The Curator had the authority to order any books to be bound when necessary, to require the return of an item from a Member for that purpose or for another Member preparing a lecture; and he was required to inspect the condition of the books annually, for which an annual return of books was required by 20 March and the Library remained closed until 1 April. The Committee selected the books; the Treasurer ordered them (but did not pay the bills until the Curator had checked them); the Committee regulated the circulation of books and had the power to impose fines (1s. per day for books not returned when requested by the Curator) and compensation for damage; and the Committee had the power of selling or exchanging duplicate items. Only Members were entitled to borrow books, and they were expected to enter details of loans in a register which was provided. The only works which they could not take out of the Library were grammars and dictionaries, and unbound periodicals. It was a matter of honour for Members to observe these simple rules, and as the number of Members was not high, the arrangements seem to have operated satisfactorily.

The period from about 1830 to 1851 provides little evidence about the Library, which must be presumed to have continued to operate under the arrangements just described, but it was a period of changing fortunes for the Institution itself. At first, the work of the Institution was running to a smooth regular pattern and was in an ascending phase of recruitment and interest. The annual season began in August with the public exhibition, followed in October by a lecture season which lasted for five months; the lectures were held weekly, and included many valuable papers on local history, antiquities, literature, geology, botany and zoology, etc. A summary of proceedings was published in 1830 but proved a financial disaster and was not repeated. Then a decline began to set in, and by 1837 there was a lack of lectures (39). This was attributed to three main causes - the contemporary excitement in politics and local government reform, the attraction of other popular lectures such as those held by the Plymouth Mechanics' Institution (which Hudson particularly blamed as the cause (40)), and a split in the Institution which took place in 1838 because of the lack of attention to science particularly natural history (41). Many members of the Plymouth Institution apparently left to join the Devon & Cornwall Natural History Society (vid. inf. section 5.3), and by 1850 the total membership of the Institution was only 44, although it was still acknowledged to be the principal literary institution in Plymouth (42). In 1846 Henry Woollcombe retired from the Presidency to which he had been elected for four quinquennia, and was made Patron of the Institution, an honour which he did not live long to enjoy; he died in 1847 and left to the Institution the manuscript of his unpublished *History of Plymouth* which is one of the few surviving treasures of the Library. Bennett must have drawn upon much first-hand knowledge in his review of the early history of the organisation in his paper of 1858-9 (43), for he had joined the Institution in 1826 (44); he considered, with hindsight, that, much as Mr. Woollcombe was esteemed by members, the Institution had been disadvantaged by the long period of rule by one person, for it had been at the cost of the independence of the Institution. However, although the *Laws* were revised in 1846 and the terms and amounts made more favourable, the decline continued. One possible solution to the dilemma had been suggested in 1844 in the form of a proposed merger between the Plymouth Institution and the Plymouth Mechanics' Institution, the latter being in process of erecting new accommodation which would have the capacity for an amalgamated

organisation. However, it seems to have been felt that a merger would not be suitable, because it was the function of the Plymouth Institution to lead in forming public taste, while the Mechanics' Institution was to follow and spread popular taste, and was concerned more with amusement rather than intellectual stimulation.(45). It is of interest to notice that there appears to have been no significant social difference in the membership of the two organisations, for the Mechanics' Institute which had been originally intended for the working class had been largely taken over by the middle class, and the membership of the Plymouth Institution which had begun as an exclusive circle in the upper echelons of the local middle class had broadened , accompanied by an increasing popularisation of lecture subjects. It was evidently not considered socially unacceptable for the two to merge. Although this merger did not take place, another merger proved to be the life-saving turning point of the Plymouth Institution, when the Devon & Cornwall Natural History Society amalgamated back with the parent body in 1851, bringing with it a healthy number of members, a collection of specimens to be added to the Museum, and scientific books which were added to the Library. The combined organisations took the official title "The Plymouth Institution and the Devon and Cornwall Natural History Society", a lengthy title which was commonly shortened to the old name Plymouth Institution, and which remained in force until 1961 when the title Plymouth Athenaeum was adopted. The merger required the revision of the rules and regulations, and the election of new officers; but although the greater liberality of the Natural History Society, with its provision for lady members and junior members, became evident in the resulting arrangements, there seems to have been no change in respect of the Library. From about 1860 onwards, however, much more information is available about the Library, its stock and administration, which was affected by the development and changes in the Institution itself, which will be described first.

The enlarged Plymouth Institution began to achieve a degree of success and stability, and from 1856 began to publish the *Annual reports* and *Transactions* from which the following account is mainly reconstructed. Membership showed a slow but steady increase until the peak years in the early 1880s, and it seems unlikely to be mere coincidence that this coincided with a continued decline in the number of scientific lectures which formed only some 38% of the total for the period 1812-1900, with

about 50% on literary subjects and 12% on art; the latter two groups frequently achieved much higher averages in the later years of the century, and was evidently a response to the public interest in these subjects rather than the higher scientific content of former years (46). Subscriptions rose from less than £100 in the 1850s to over £230 in the early 1880s, before a decline to about £130 in the trough of 1896-8 (47). There were other sources of income, but apart from renting out the accommodation, the sums were minimal, and the total income was only about £30 - £50 more than the subscriptions. Expenditure on the Library generally followed the same trend as the annual income, and varied from as little as £16 to nearly £50, with typical expenditure on books and binding fluctuating between £25 - £35. Some serious attention was given to the Library by some Curators, whose title was changed to that of Honorary Librarian in 1888. Two men held office for lengthy periods, viz. T. R. A. Briggs 1869 - 1883, and J. Brooking Rowe 1884 - 1899. Although the official description of the duties of the Librarian remained unaltered from the previous rules (vid. sup.), and were distinctly limiting, both of these Librarians clearly had a deep interest in the Library and were apparently firm in pushing their recommendations for its improvement, although this is implicit rather than explicit in the published references to the Library. The Institution was incorporated in 1884, and a Council replaced the former Committee, of which the Honorary Librarian continued to be a member.

The Library experienced a period of consolidation and development from about 1860 to 1899. In 1865 the book selection policy was re-interpreted from the original purpose - (acquiring such books as would assist the Members in their research, and especially in the preparation of lectures)- and was paraphrased as :

> "... a library should be formed, which should chiefly consist of such books as are not easily procured in a provincial town, so remote from the universities and the metropolis; ...". (48)

The most important additions to stock were listed in the annual reports, and still show a scientific emphasis although as literature and art became more frequent subjects of the lectures the stock of the Library was extended to cover them also. A demand from some Members in 1858-9 for more popular books to be added besides the specialised works was apparently met by the Secretaries' suggestion that the best rudimentary treatises in each department of science and art should be acquired (49).

During the 1860s a positive attempt was also made to fill the gaps in periodical holdings to enhance the usefulness of the Library (50).

New acquisitions were obtained through the medium of purchase, donation and exchange, with much emphasis on the last two methods. The funds for purchase were often small, usually between £25 - £35, which had to cover binding and periodical subscriptions as well as the purchase of new books. Donations had been encouraged from the beginning, and continued with regularity, from individuals and organisations. In 1869-70, for example, three corresponding and honorary members each presented a copy of their respective publications, a naturalist in the North of England send a copy of his book on the flora and fauna of Alnwick, and four Members presented books or periodical parts (51); several societies, including the Royal Institution of Cornwall, the Literary and Philosophical Society of Manchester, and the Royal Dublin Society, responded to the Librarian's request for back numbers of their serial publications to complete the sets in the Library (52); and unsolicited donations came from the British Association, the Smithsonian Institute, the Royal University of Norway, and many others, usually in the form of annual reports or journals (53). The Librarian was encouraged by this general response to suggest widening the correspondence to a larger number of scientific and literary societies in order to obtain their publications (54). Early exchanges were mentioned in 1857-8 when the *Transactions* of the Dublin Natural History Society and Dublin Geological Society were obtained in that way. The Institution began to publish its own *Transactions* regularly from 1865, and thereafter was in a strong position to extend exchange arrangements, resulting in a steady increase of Library additions from that source. In 1886-7 it appears that at least thirty five societies or similar organisations presented their publications on the exchange principle, including: Royal Microscopical Society, Zoological Society of London, Geologists Association, Royal Society, Royal Geographical Society, Geological and Natural History Survey of Canada, Natural History Society of Glasgow, Societa Toscana, Royal Cornwall Polytechnic Society, British Association, Devonshire Association, Smithsonian Institution, Linnean Society, British and American Archaeological Society of Rome, Essex Field Club, Cincinnati Society, and so on (55). Two large and important donations were made to the Library within the short period 1884-1887. The first was a donation from the Record Commissioners which included 74 volumes of

Calendars and 150 volumes of *Chronicles* , plus other works making a total of some 250 volumes (56). The second donation was a valuable collection of about 1,500 Devonshire pamphlets and tracts published from the sixteenth to the nineteenth-century, being about Devon, by Devon authors, or published in Devon. The collection had been formed by the late James Davidson and James Bridge Davidson (57) and the family had intended to sell the pamphlets by auction until the intervention of the Hon. Librarian J. Brooking Rowe caused the collection to be donated to the Plymouth Institution, upon condition:

> "1. That the Tracts, etc., be kept together and in locked cases, and be called the 'Davidson Collection', and that a special label be provided for each separate Tract.
>
> 2. That the Tracts be not allowed to circulate or to be taken out of the building of the Athenaeum.
>
> 3. That the collection be under the charge of the Curator of the Library, and only to be consulted on application to and at such times as may be arranged with him.
>
> 4. That any person wishing to see any Tract be requested to fill up a ticket in the form provided, and the applicant shall be responsible to the Society for the safe custody and return of the book." (57)

The total stock was estimated at about 3,250 volumes in 1885 (58) and had grown to about 5,000 volumes in 1895, including about 2,000 which were uncatalogued (59). The growth of the Library brought with it problems of accommodation, arrangement, cataloguing and control, which eventually could no longer be ignored by the Council.

The problem of accommodation was solved by a number of temporary relief measures at first. In 1871-2 (60) and 1878-9 (61) extra shelves were fitted. By 1881-2 the shelves were full, and it was decided to sell the set of *Delphin Classics* in order to release shelf space for new acquisitions (62). The volumes donated by the Record Commissioners in 1884-5 could not be accommodated in the Library, and were housed in a bookcase in the ante-room to the right of the entrance lobby (63). The Davidson Collection had to be housed on extra shelves fitted in "the lower library", apparently the same room (64). These temporary expedients were not satisfactory, but it was not until much later that the problem of accommodation was provided with a long term solution (vid. inf.).

The method of arranging the stock is not described, but probably consisted of a combination of arrangement by size, broad subject and alphabetical order. Much of the stock consisted of periodical volumes, which would not have been difficult to arrange for easy retrieval. Probably some adjustment of stock was made by the various Librarians, and this is likely to have been the meaning of the report in 1855-6 that the Library had been "re-arranged"(65), and again in 1865-6 (66); in 1867-8 the Library was said to have been in need of yet another re-arrangement (67), but as this was carried out by the same Librarian as in the previous one, 1865-6, it seems unlikely that the same person carried out two major re-organisations, probably only adjustment to ease the most crowded shelves.

Unfortunately the catalogues do not provide a clue to the arrangement of the books, for the earliest surviving printed catalogue appears to be the 1894 edition. Yet there were apparently several early printed catalogues of the Library. In 1855-6 it was reported that the *Catalogue* was "in a state of progress"(68), and the next year it was reported that copies of the Catalogue were being distributed with the *Annual report* (69). In 1867-8 it was reported that the new catalogue was in the hands of the printer (70), and this was apparently completed in 1870, for Shelly stated in 1885 that there was " ... a catalogue arranged according to subjects, printed in 1870" (71), and the 1892 *Catalogue of the Local Department of Plymouth Free Public Library* listed a copy of the 1870 *Catalogue of the Plymouth Institution* amongst its own holdings (72). The 1894 *Index catalogue* of the Library was evidently produced under the influence of the Borough Librarian, W. H. K. Wright,who was a Member of the Institution although not its Librarian at that time. The entries were arranged on the dictionary catalogue principle which had been adopted for the Borough Library, but no clue is supplied in it to the location of the books. Figure 25 shows a typical page from the 1894 *Index catalogue*. The contents of the volume confirm the general picture of subject scope indicated by the references of previous years. The contents are mostly in English, with some French such as *Annales de chimie* and a few standard works. There is a little Latin, and a few items in Italian and German. The subjects are mainly a wide range of science and literature, with very little theology or classics. The list of *Transactions and Proceedings* shown in Fig. 25 give a good idea of the general scope, although many of the runs of holdings were defective. Particularly good runs

Terre, Théorie de la Figure de la, tiré des Principes de l'Hydrostatique par Clairaut. Second Edition. Paris. 1808.
Testacea Britannica; or, Natural History of British Shells. Geo. Montagu. Parts I. and II., with Supplement. 3 vols. 1803.
Testaceologicus, Index. An Illustrated Catalogue of British and Foreign Shells. W. Wood. Ed. Sylvanus Hanley. 1856.
Thesaurus Linguæ Latinæ, Roberti Stephani. 4 vols. 1740.
——— Græcæ Linguæ ab H. Stephano constructus. 8 vols. 1816–18.
Thunderstorms; and the Means of Protecting Buildings and Shipping against the Destructive Effects of Lightning. [Sir] W. Snow Harris. London. 1843.
Timber, Construction of, from Early Growth. J. Hill. 1774.
Tin Trade of the Ancients in Cornwall, and the "Ictis" of Diodorus Siculus. Sir Christopher Hawkins. London. 1811.
Toddington, Gloucestershire, Seat of Lord Sudeley. J. Britton. 1840.
Tofâ Zerāyah; or, Essence of Mohamedan Law. Syed Zeeâ-oodeen, Native Judge. 1846.
Topography of Devon. J. Brooking Rowe. Plymouth. 1882.
Tourists' Companion. J. Sanford. Devonport. 1828.
Tokens—Descriptive Catalogue of the London Traders, Tavern, and Coffee House—Current in the Seventeenth Century. Presented to the Corporation Library by H. B. H. Beaufoy. J. H. Burn. London. 1855.
Tournefort, Acquisextiensis Doctoris Medici Parisiensis, &c., Institutiones Rei Herbariæ. 3 vols. Parisiis. 1700.
Tracts, Mostly West of England. R. N. Worth. 3 vols. v.d.
Transactions and Proceedings—See Asiatic Society of Bengal; Australasian Association for Advancement of Science; Berwickshire Naturalists' Club; Belfast Naturalists' Field Club; Botanical Society; Bristol Institution; Bristol Naturalists' Society; Cambridge Philosophical Society; Calcutta Medical and Physical Society; Cincinnati Museum Association; Dublin Natural History Society; Devonshire Association; Entomological Society of London; Ex Libris Society; English Dialect Society; Early English Text Society; Essex Field Club; Epping Forest and County of Essex Field Club; Folk-Lore Society; Geological Society of London; Geological Society of France; Geological Society of Russia; Glasgow Natural History Society; Geologists' Association; Lancashire and Cheshire Historical Society; Linnean Society; Liverpool Literary and Philosophical Society; Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society; Manchester Municipal Society; Manchester Scientific Students' Association; Marine Biological Association; Meridên Scientific Association; Northumberland and Durham Natural History Society; Norfolk and Norwich Naturalists' Society; Nova Scotia Institute of Natural Science; Plymouth Institution; Penzance Natural History Society; Palæontographical Society; Rochester Academy of Science;

Fig. 25 Plymouth Institution. *Index catalogue*, 1894.

were held of the publications series and periodicals such as: *Early English Text Society series, Folk Lore Society series, Palaeontological Society, Philosophical transactions, Ray Society publications,* to name but a few. A separate *Catalogue of the Davidson Collection of pamphlets* was also printed in 1894, and a shelf catalogue was also prepared under the direction of W.H.K. Wright (73), who appears at this time to have been working very closely with the listed Honorary Librarian, J. Brooking Rowe, possibly as an unofficial Library Adviser. A system of shelfmarks was introduced in about 1895, apparently for the first time, for the 1894-5 *Annual report* contains the comment that:

> "A great deal of work has now to be done in shelfmarking the books, and entering them in the Catalogue for easy reference, but it is impossible to commence this until more room is found." (74)

The problem of control of the Library had now become a very real issue. From about 1870 onwards there were frequent reports of missing volumes, even before the use of the Library was extended to Associates on the same terms as Members in about 1877 (75). This extension more than doubled the number of potential users, for the number of Members was 76 in 1880-1 but the number of Associates was 128. The Curator soon pointed out the problems of control to the Council and Members:

> "Your Curator is desirous of expressing a very strong opinion that proper arrangements should be made for the issue of books. At present there is no check, the Society simply trusting to the person taking out a book entering it himself, and unless he does so there is no information as to its whereabouts. This plan answered when none but Lecturing Members were permitted to use the Library; but now that Associates have this privilege the number of readers is greatly increased, and it is impossible to exercise proper supervision. At present volumes are missing, of which neither the Curator or Housekeeper have been able to find any trace. It is very desirable that so valuable a Library should be made available for as large a number of persons as possible, and your Curator hopes that something may be done to effect this, and at the same time to prevent loss or damage to what is, after all, the property of a private Society." (76)

The following year the situation was reported as having deteriorated.

> "... much anxiety has been caused to your Curator. Of course, what is wanted is a Librarian who would be able to attend daily between certain hours, and that books should be only issued by him." (77)

The Council could not see their way to appointing a paid librarian,

but did sanction a new set of *Library Regulations* which they hoped would help the situation (Table 20) (78).

The problems of accommodation and control which J. Brooking Rowe encountered at the beginning of his term of office as Librarian in 1884 continued with little alleviation until shortly before the end of the century, when he had the satisfaction of seeing one of them resolved. The problems of accommodating the expanding Library which had at first been met by temporary measures began to receive serious consideration by 1895, when it began to seem that the answer could be to erect an extension. Plans were drawn up and tenders received; but at the annual meeting 1897-8 the building project was abandoned in favour of a simple solution of exchanging accommodation. In 1883 the Athenaeum had been extended to incorporate an enlarged Museum, and an Art Gallery had been erected at the same time alongside the lecture room. The Art Gallery was larger than necessary for the exhibitions, and it was now agreed to fit it up with bookcases and transfer the old Library from the upstairs room it had occupied for eighty years, and which was "altogether unequal to contain the increase in number of books" (79), into what now became "a very handsome Library Room" (8)". The necessary adaptations were carried out and the transfer completed in early 1898, with an official opening by the President who happened to be W. H.K. Wright, the Borough Librarian (81). Unfortunately the members could not immediately receive the full benefit of the new arrangements, for it was discovered that the room was capable of bringing in a useful income if it was hired for examinations and various meetings. It seems to have been this new difficulty which was the last straw to the sorely-tried Librarian, for he resigned the same year. In his report for the year, he stated that the new Library was commodious and pleasant, likely to be of the greatest use (when members were allowed to have the full benefit of it), but he resigned because under the existing circumstances no Librarian could perform the necessary duties satisfactorily (82). He could not accept the great responsibility of the Library which had no protection, was used by strangers, to which there was easy access, with a risk of great loss. He paid tribute to the assistance he had received from the caretaker who had been of the greatest help in arranging and classifying the books, far in excess of his duty. No doubt the resignation of the Honorary Librarian, in whose time so much had been achieved, was received with regret by the Council; but they were too busy to think

1. The Library shall be open daily (except on the days mentioned in Regulation 2) from 10 in the Morning until dusk.
2. The Library shall be closed on all Sundays, Good Friday, Christmas Day, and Bank Holidays; on Wednesday afternoon in every week from 2 o'clock; and on such other days as shall be directed by the Council; as well as from the 20th March to 1st April, as provided by Law 38.
3. Every Member or Associate may borrow from the Library any number of printed circulating Books not exceeding four, and may exchange any of the borrowed volumes for others as often as he pleases, but so that he shall not have more than four volumes in his possession at any one time.
4. No Book borrowed from the Library shall be retained for a longer period than twenty-one days, if the same be applied for by any other Member or Associate, nor in any case shall any Book be retained for a longer period than three months.
5. Every Member or Associate who shall borrow any Book shall be responsible to the Society for its safety and good condition from the time of its leaving the Library until it shall be returned, and in case of loss or damage he shall replace the same or make it good, or if so required by the Council, shall furnish another copy of the entire set of which it may be a part.
6. The Council, or the Curator of the Library between its meetings, shall decide what works shall not go out of the Library, either on account of their value or on account of their being works of reference.
7. No book shall be issued to any person not being a Member or Associate, without a special order of the Council.
8. Every application by any Member or Associate, who shall not attend in person, for the loan of any book or books, shall be in writing, and be presented to the Curator of the Library or the Housekeeper by an authorised agent therein named.
9. The title of the book borrowed shall be entered in the book provided for the purpose, and such entry shall be signed by the borrower or his agent, and the return of books borrowed shall be duly entered in the same book. The borrower shall also fill up a ticket in the form provided, and sign the same and hand it to the Housekeeper on leaving the Library, and the Housekeeper is required to demand such ticket.
10. The Council for good cause shown shall have power to relax or suspend any of these Rules or Regulations in the case of any Member or Associate requiring books in connection with any matter of special research in which he may be engaged.
11. These Rules and Regulations shall be taken and read in connection with Laws 34 to 39, heading "LIBRARY."

Table 20. Plymouth Institution Library regulations 1887-8.

(Source: *T.P.I.* 10, 1887-8, xiv-xv)

much about the Library just then, for they were considering an offer from the Trustees of the Plymouth Mechanics' Institution to effect a merger with the Plymouth Institution.

By the end of the nineteenth-century the activities of the Plymouth Institution had broadened and become more popular, Associates outnumbered the Lecturing Members, and ladies had begun to take up membership as opposed to attending the exhibitions, social occasions, etc. by invitation. The Institution had fine buildings and was still the premier literary institution of Plymouth, but the changes in its membership and activities since 1844 now made possible the merger which had been rejected on the previous occasion. In 1898-9 the Trustees of the Plymouth Mechanics' Institution approached the Council of the Plymouth Institution with an offer to handover its funds to the Plymouth Institution or joint Trustees, partly for the erection of a lending and reference room of general literature, and partly for general purposes. The Plymouth Institution agreed in April 1899 (83) and the following arrangements were made:

- The Trustees should hand over to the Council a sum of about £2,000, of which about £1,500 was to be spent in erecting a newsroom and library on the vacant ground at the rear of the Athenaeum, £300 as a building maintenance fund, and the balance for the purchase of new books.
- All members of the Plymouth Mechanics' Institution could become members of the appropriate category of the Plymouth Institution, provided that they continued to pay an annual subscription at their former rate of 10s. or 7s., the difference being made up annually from funds held by the joint Trustees and not expected to be less than £1,800. Any deficiency on the annual account of the Plymouth Institution could in future also be discharged from this fund, until the fund fell below £500, at which time it was to be paid over into a general fund (84).

The immediate effect on the membership of the rejuvenated Plymouth Institution was striking. The numbers of members joining each category from the Plymouth Mechanics' Institution were: 18 Members, 49 Associates, and 101 Lady Associates. Immediately the balance of membership changed from the former approximation of 1 : 1 Member : Associate with a negligible number of lady and junior members, to about 1 : 1 : 1 in 1900 with Lady Associates forming about one third of the membership, to a rapid increase in the latter group so that by 1906 the Ladies formed about

one half of the members, the ratio now being 1 : 1 : 2, and the actual figures for 1913-4 being 80 Members, 89 Associates, 186 Lady Associates, and 2 Junior Associates. The reason was not far to seek - the attraction was the new Lending Library which had been erected in accordance with the agreement, and into which the Mechanics' Institute Library had been transferred and refreshed by a considerable injection of new stock. The new building was opened on 3 January 1900, and proved a great success. The new Library operated completely separately from the Plymouth Institution's own former Library, which was now referred to as the Scientific Library to distinguish it, and the Scientific Library continued to function under its own rules as before. The new Library was referred to as the Lending Library, and was under the general management of a special committee of which W. H.K. Wright was the Chairman from the beginning to his death in 1915. The Lending Library had to be open for extensive hours, and could not be operated on the casual arrangements which still operated for the Scientific Library. In August 1900 Miss Burke was appointed Library Attendant of the "General Library". Immediately she made a good impression and was given favourable comment in the annual reports by the Library Committee; in fact, she remained the Librarian until 1935, when the Lending Library was discontinued.

The Lending Library was a popular service. In 1904-5 over 250 out of the 375 members of the Institution were using it. The annual issues were at first below 10,000 per annum but in 1905-6 reached 14,550 issues, a weekly average of over 280 compared to less than 200 five years previously. Perhaps the comparatively small injections of new stock, of about 100 or 200 per annum, were insufficient to maintain the interest of all users, for after 1905-6 the typical annual issues went back to between 10,000 and 12,000, fluctuating seasonally with about 200 issues per week in summer and about 290 in winter. The breakdown of issues is not specified, but appears to have been primarily fiction, which had particular appeal to the Lady Associates. In 1905-6 an attempt was made to reduce the expenditure on new fiction by placing a subscription with Smith's Circulating Library, which proved quite satisfactory (85). Another stratagem adopted to make the bookfund stretch to the limit was the purchase of secondhand books as well as new publications. In 1910-11 the Circulating Library Committee reported that it had added over 400 volumes including secondhand items; 75% of the additions was fiction, and the remainder consisted of biography,

travel, popular science, and miscellaneous works. The chief demand, it confirmed, was for new novels. The previous year it had reported that modern plays and essays were in good demand, and that the illustrated magazines and reviews were well used. The successful experiment with the subscription to Smith's Circulating Library paved the way for a subscription to the Times Book Club, from which 31 works were borrowed in 1912-3. The Circulating Library in 1914 was clearly thought to be fulfilling a necessary function in the Plymouth Institution. Possibly in the early years after amalgamation, the fact that about one half of the total membership consisted of Lady Associates, who particularly valued the Lending Library, would have made it seem that the withdrawal of the expensive new facility would have meant financial suicide through the withdrawal of subscriptions, and in any case the agreement with the Mechanics' Institution had to be honoured. But, as the years went by, the financial statements yield reasonable evidence that the cost of the Lending Library was perhaps out of proportion and that the risk of losing subscriptions, if it was not maintained, was not so hazardous as continuing to run the Institution into debt. For several years prior to 1914 the overdraft at the bank was over £200 each year, and the funds held by the Trustees were dwindling from the requests to make good the deficits each year. Before the amalgamation and the setting up of the new Library, the cost of the Library was in the region of £30 - £35 per annum, and the total salary bill was about £36. The new Lending Library required an annual expenditure of about £70 - £80 for periodicals, an increase of about £30 per annum on new books and binding, and at least £60 extra for the salary of the Library Assistant making an extra cost of some £160 - £170 directly attributable to the Library. Subscription income in 1898 was £172, and had risen by 1914 to only £258; the amount of income obtained from hiring the rooms had become significant, by 1914 it was £149 out of the total income of £459. It must have been a temptation to the Council to find some means of reducing the disproportionate expenditure on the Lending Library especially as facilities for borrowing recreational literature were available in many libraries in the Three Towns including the Free Public Libraries.

Meantime, what was happening to the Scientific Library? There appears to have been comparatively little to report in most years. In 1901-2 the Council authorised the expenditure of not more than £20 on new books for it was "many years since any money was expended in this

direction" (86). Binding swallowed up much of the available funds but was frequently reported as still inadequate to maintain the stock. Usage of the Library was light - some measure of this is obtained in 1902-3 when 120 books were borrowed in the year (87). In 1903-4 some valuable books on natural history were removed from the recently acquired Gatcombe-Pickthall Collection (mainly of china) and placed in a special bookcase prepared for them (88); each book was given a bookplate of the Plymouth Institution and was inscribed suitably. Exchange, donations, subscriptions, and general purchases continued as before. An important purchase in 1903-4 was the tenth edition of *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (89). Mrs. T. Snow Harris donated a lengthy run of *Geological magazine* and some books (90). The Honorary Librarian drew special attention to the Scientific Library:

> "The Library as one for scientific reference ... has not its equal in the West of England; it behoves us to maintain its character." (91)

He recommended that out-of-date volumes should be withdrawn from the shelves and put into store elsewhere. The books and room had been cleaned during the three week closure for stock check in July, which was apparently a special measure as the usual closing was in March; and a long library ladder had been purchased so that books could be reached on the top shelves (were they previously unused?!). In 1908-9 the gas lighting in the Scientific Library was replaced by electricity (92), and it was in that year that the local historian C. W. Bracken became Librarian. He took his responsibilities very seriously, and was able to report in 1910-11 that all the books in the Scientific Library were arranged according to subject and that subject catalogues had been started - Botany and Entomology were complete but much work had to be done in renumbering the *Catalogue* as the result of the rearrangement of the books (93). The Davidson Collection had been numbered and the books were in process of arrangement. Two years later he reported that the subject catalogue for Geology was complete, and he had finished renumbering the General Catalogue, which was now complete and accurate (94). His successor further reported in 1913-4 that all complete volumes of periodicals had been bound up to the end of 1912. The Scientific Library therefore appears to have been in a good working order in 1914, but received a low level of usage because of its quite specialised nature. It exceeded the scientific scope of the Marine Biological Association Library, and it seems likely

that the staff and visiting naturalists from the Marine Laboratory were glad to make use of this facility which supplemented their own narrowly specialised library; certainly many of them were members of the Plymouth Institution. No other library in the Three Towns had a scientific collection of such value to the serious student, but it was little known.

> "And I do not think the extent of our Scientific Library is generally known. Here the student can find and peruse in quiet complete sets of all the chief scientific periodicals. In this respect it is unrivalled in this part of England, and surely should appeal to and be used by more than is the case." (95)

Such was the comment of the President in 1912-3; but unfortunately the Library was destroyed in the Blitz of 1941, before a new wave of scientific interest, akin to that which established the Institution, had the chance to thoroughly exploit it.

5.3 THE DEVON AND CORNWALL NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

The reason for the formation of the Devon and Cornwall Natural History Society was probably the dissatisfaction of some members of the Plymouth Institution over the proportion of the programme devoted to science in general and natural history in particular, although the details are not clear. It is certain that there was a meeting on 3 May 1838 at the Freemasons' Hall, under the chairmanship of Colonel Hamilton Smith, the scholar, historian, artist and author of many works on natural history, who had settled in the area, and was clearly one of the leaders of the new Society. More than fifty gentlemen were enrolled as members and over one hundred indicated their intention to join (96). At this meeting they approved the rules of the Society, which were probably the same as those of which a copy survives in the British Library with the curious publication date of MDCCCILI; the British Library has assumed the date to be 1852, but it would seem more likely that the date was a misprint for MDCCCXLI, i.e. 1841, for the Society had ceased to exist by 1852. As the Society had only a short history of thirteen years, it seems unlikely that more than one set of *Laws* was produced, and it is likely therefore that the set from which the following information was taken was the original text (97).

> The Society was formed to carry out several activities, viz.:
>
> "That the Society do form a Library and Museum and do hold weekly meetings for promoting the Science of Natural History during the six Summer Months - that is from April till September, inclusive, and monthly, during the Winter recess - that is from November to March, inclusive."

The annual subscriptions were very moderate, 1 gn., and donors of £10 or more became life members; however, members had to be elected by ballot, by a quorum of fifteen and with a majority of two-thirds, which left quite a generous election margin. Unlike the Plymouth Institution the Society made provision for ladies to be admitted without ballot, at a subscription of ½ gn., which allowed them to attend most of the lectures (but excluded them from certain lectures deemed not suitable for ladies). There was also provision for a junior branch consisting of youths aged 12 to 18 who subscribed 5s. p.a.. Like the Plymouth Institution, there were Honorary and Corresponding Members, and Darwin and Hooker were elected Honorary Members. Strangers could be admitted,

although no resident within seven miles radius could be admitted more than once per session unless he became a member. Officers of the Army and Navy in active service were admitted on presenting their card to the Chairman or Secretaries, and members of other scientific or literary societies were also allowed to attend.

The Society was governed by a Council consisting of the President, five vice-presidents, two secretaries a treasurer and five curators, plus fourteen members elected from the general membership. The Library was cared for by one of the curators, but the Museum apparently required the attentions of two curators. The foundation of the Library and Museum had been the first stated purposes of the Society, and even at the foundation meeting on 3 May 1838 it was recorded that several donations had already been made to them, although no details are given. The duties of the Curator of the Library are laid down in Law 23, and it is interesting to notice that this officer appeared to have a more responsible and active role than the duties specified for his counterpart at the Plymouth Institution:

> "That the Curator of the Library shall have sole charge of the Books and Periodicals belonging to the Society, shall purchase all Works ordered by the Council, and keep a catalogue thereof on the Library table."

Law 28 stipulates that there should be a suggestions register in which members could recommend titles for purchase, and this would be laid before the Council by the Curator, the Council then deciding by ballot whether to purchase or reject the title. Law 25 sets out the Library Rules which were comparatively simple. All Members of the Society could borrow, but they were restricted to one volume at a time unless preparing a lecture for the Society. The loan period was marked on the cover of each volume, and the overdue charge was 2d. per day, the Curator being responsible for sending out reminders to defaulters. All books to be borrowed were to be obtained on application to the Curator or the Sub-Librarian (of whom no further information is available but who might possibly have been a caretaker acting in the absence of the Curator). The loan was effected by signing a register, and the books had to be returned personally to the Curator or Sub-Librarian, and not lent to other people, under penalty of 1 gn. fine. There were restrictions on some categories of material; books deposited in the Library were not to be removed from the Society's rooms; books interdicted by the Council from general circulation could only be taken out

with the written permission of the President or one of the Vice-Presidents; periodical publications had to remain on the table for one month before they could be taken out.

Apart from these laws and rules, little seems to be known about the Library, or, indeed, about the Society. The first meeting place of the Society was at the Mechanics' Institute, but by 1839 they had their own rooms in Princess Square, moving to the new social facilities at the Royal Union Baths in Union St. in 1844 until it was pulled down (98). It is generally considered that it was the demolition of the Royal Union Baths which eventually caused the Society to return to an amalgamation with the Plymouth Institution in 1851, but Lewis has shown that the Society reverted to Princess Square in 1847 (98), so there must have been other factors involved of which no details survive. The fact was that the Society did merge in 1851 and its name was preserved in the new organisation's title "Plymouth Institution and the Devon and Cornwall Natural History Society"; it brought new life into the older organisation, and added its Library and Museum collections to those at the Athenaeum.

CHAPTER SIX. LIBRARIES FOR THE WORKING CLASSES.

The reading public of the eighteenth-century had been primarily the middle class, which was soon well supplied by a network of subscription libraries of different kinds and libraries of societies such as the literary and philosophical societies, which have been described in the previous two chapters. The nineteenth-century saw the change from a reading public which was primarily middle class in 1800 to a reading public which was overwhelmingly working class by the end of the century. This phenomenon has been studied in depth by many writers such as Altick (1), Thompson (2) and Webb (3), and only a brief introduction need be given here, in so far as it affected the types of library to be found in the Three Towns.

At the beginning of the nineteenth-century many factors were still militating against the spread of the reading habit into the working classes. There was the obvious problem of lack of education, and the fear of the governing classes that education was dangerous and would lead to revolutions such those which had been recently experienced in France and America. The cautious surmise that it might be safer to provide a little education for the working class, so that it could read the *Bible* and other religious and morally educational literature, and would know sufficient to understand its place in society, led to the spread of endowed schools, and from the early nineteenth-century the British and National monitorial schools run by voluntary bodies. The working class itself began to seize opportunities for education, stimulated by such ideas as spread through the encouragement by the Methodist movement to read, the ideas in Paine's *Rights of Man*, and the increasing complexity of work since the introduction of new technologies made possible by the application of steam power. At the beginning of the century the major problem of lack of education was strongly compounded by the problems of poor working conditions and home conditions. Labour was cheap, wages were low, and even children had to be sent cut to work in order to earn enough to keep the family alive. The long work hours, from dawn to dusk, left little time - or energy - for learning to read, or for reading as a leisure activity, even if literature could be obtained to be read. Even if the obstacle of access to literature was overcome, there still remained the further discouragement of overcrowded and badly lit rooms which made concentration difficult.

Slowly but surely improvements were made throughout the century. Legislation gradually improved working conditions and limited the hours. The pressure brought about on the towns by the rapid urbanisation, through a combination of consequences of the Agricultural and Industrial Revolution, disrupted the traditional forms of local government and gave rise to new legislation such as the 1835 *Municipal Reform Act*, followed by general and local Acts which gave powers to new councils to provide various community services, such as compulsory police forces 1856, and public health measures; permissive powers were available for public amenities such as museums 1845, libraries 1850, and other social and educational improvements.

The right, indeed the necessity, of elementary education for all, began to be realised and implemented. At first, however, the working class formed the users rather than the organisers of suitable establishments, for the money to establish schools and organisations such as mechanics' institutes was largely provided by the middle class. The working class lacked the experience of organisation and management, and the necessary influence, to provide entirely for itself. The early attempts to do so, in the cooperative movement of the 1820s and 1830s largely failed. The organisations established by the middle class for the working class often failed also, in a different way. Mechanics' institutes are an example. Although genuinely intended for the working class, and with working class representation on their committees, nevertheless they had largely become popular middle class societies by the mid nineteenth-century, with classes in subjects such as French, music and drawing, rather than the essential classes in basic English subjects and mathematics and general science, more suited to the needs of the working classes. The libraries, too, consisted largely of works which the donors did not want and which proved a disappointment to the working man looking for education with practical applications. The disillusioned working classes began to turn again to the provision of facilities for learning and reading through their own organisation and through their own financial resources. Mutual improvement societies and working men's associations became widespread especially in the 1850s and 1860s. Some of these were working class versions of the old bookclubs, under new names. The small financial income often led to either the demise of the organisations, or the need to seek financial patronage in order to survive. One successful movement, however, which was wholly working

class, was the cooperative movement which successfully re-established itself as a profit-making trading movement; part of the profits could be used to establish educational activities for its members at no direct personal cost, and this ensured success and survival, for the managers were the working class and could apply these resources to fill the needs of its own members.

The nineteenth-century also saw the rise of the popular press. At first the materials for the working class to read were largely confined to the productions distributed gratuitously by organisations such as the Gospel Tract Society, the Religious Tract Society, and many others, which was primarily religious and moral literature. Later, cheap literature, particularly nonfiction, began to be published by the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, publishers of the *Library of entertaining knowledge, Penny magazine, Penny cyclopaedia, etc.* Publishers such as W. & R. Chambers and Bohn brought out cheap editions of standard works. Changes in the technology of the paper and printing industries made it possible to produce large cheap editions, and these became readily available throughout the country. Railway bookstalls, for example, carried cheap fiction and non-fiction as well as their circulating libraries from the mid century.

The general improvement of conditions gradually made it easier for the working class to obtain some elementary education, and the time and means to read could increasingly be found by those who were ambitious. Although rate-supported public libraries for use by everybody were theoretically possible from 1850 for the larger towns and from 1866 for all local authorities, very few were founded in the first couple of decades. The movement spread particularly quickly after the introduction of free elementary education which began in 1870, until, by 1900, the working class population had became a reading people.

The libraries which will be considered in this chapter are three important types which preceded the rate-supported public library: mechanics' institute libraries, working men's associations and libraries, and cooperative trading society libraries.

6.1 MECHANICS' INSTITUTES: THEIR ORIGIN AND EARLY ORGANISATION IN THE THREE TOWNS.

A number of factors contributed to the origin and development of mechanics' institutes: the increased need for skilled workers with elementary scientific knowledge; the growing popular interest in science; the development of a movement for popular education; and the swelling working class movement for political and social reform (4). Early attempts to provide for these increasing needs were made in scattered eighteenth-century societies such as the Spitalfields Mathematical Society in 1717 (5). These helped to promote a climate for what emerged as mechanics' institutes. The origin of this movement is normally attributed to George Birkbeck's classes in Glasgow, which he started in 1799 for the workmen who made his scientific apparatus and who had expressed an interest in knowing more about the subject. The classes continued after Birkbeck moved to London five years later, and a small class library was established. Dispute over its control led in 1823 to the separate establishment of the Mechanics' Class of the Glasgow Institution, which was soon abbreviated to Mechanics' Institution, a name which became attached to the movement. Birkbeck and others in London supported the suggestion that a similar class should be founded there, and in 1823 the London Mechanics' Institution was founded, with the object of providing "instruction of the members in the principles of the arts they practise, and in the various branches of science and useful knowledge" (6). The method was based on a small subscription from the mechanics and others who were members, plus such donations of money, books, etc., as should be offered, and the provision of lectures, classes, a workshop and laboratory, and a library (7). A reading room was opened in 1824 and a lending library in 1825, with over 1,400 volumes of which more than 60% had been specially purchased to meet the needs of the users, i.e. currently effective stock.

The movement spread rapidly in the next few years, especially in the industrial areas. In 1826 there were 104 institutions. Many then foundered because of the economic depression, the withdrawal of support by the wealthier classes, unsuitable courses, the exclusion of political, economic and religious issues, etc. (8). There was some recovery in the 1830s, particularly in the Midlands and increasingly in the rural areas, and the number rose to about 260 associations of this type in 1841. Most were small, under 200 members; about 20% had from

200 - 500 members, and a few exceeded 500. The mechanics' institutes in Plymouth and Devonport seem generally to have fallen in the top 25% in membership size, sometimes approaching the highest numbers at times of particular success. By the 1840s generally there was a greater emphasis on the social side of the work than on the original educational emphasis. Classes were being offered by the larger institutions on a wide range of subjects, including many which were clearly of middle-class appeal, such as Latin, Greek, elocution and music. The working mechanics formed a minority instead of the originally intended majority of the memberships. The evidence of Samuel Smiles to the 1849 Select Committee on Public Libraries emphasised this point:

> "The mechanics' institutes in the large towns, generally speaking, are not Institutes of mechanics; they are for the most part Institutes of the middle and respectable classes, and a small proportion, in some cases not so much as a half, of working men; a class superior to working men, and a small proportion of working men receiving comparatively high wages, support shoe institutions; generally speaking, they are not Mechanics' institutes, and it is a misnomer to designate them as such." (9)

Hudson, in his survey published in 1851 (10), estimated that there were about 700 institutes of the mechanics' institute type, of which 87% were in England. Their libraries totalled about 815,000 volumes, which averaged less than 1,200 per institute but in practice ranged from the largest library of 15,300 volumes at Liverpool to stocks of less than 1,000 volumes which were characteristic of more than half of the libraries. The libraries of Plymouth and Devonport Mechanics' Institutes at that time were in the region of 3,000 volumes each, putting them amongst the largest libraries but falling far short of Liverpool.

Many of the mechanics' institutes were unable to compete at the end of the century with the growing public libraries and technical education. Some libraries were taken over by public libraries, such as at Devonport in 1881; others were absorbed into technical colleges, or, like Plymouth, amalgamated with another society; many simply disappeared, as did Stonehouse in about 1853; and a few continued. In general, the local mechanics' institutes showed the same features as the others in the movement, with little of special note beyond the fact that these were quite large organisations in comparison with the majority. One of the most interesting features about them is their origin, and the attempt to create one unified mechanics' institute for the whole of

the Three Towns. If it had succeeded, it would have been the largest mechanics' institution in the country, but, as will now be shown, this was not to be.

The earliest local reference to mechanics' institutes was a letter dated 14 February 1825 in a local newspaper; the writer was "Amicus", later revealed to be George Harvey, a former mechanic who was well aware of "the value of scientific information to workmen in general, ..." (11) In his letter, Amicus began by saying that the progress of knowledge among the lower orders of society was one of the most pleasing pictures the benevolent mind could contemplate, and that the moral and intellectual improvement of the human species must not be neglected if any opportunity arose for its advancement. The mechanics' institutes, founded in London, Manchester, Leeds and many other places, provided such an opportunity, and he called the attention of the newspaper's "enlightened readers" to the propriety of establishing one of those useful institutions, "confined exclusively to objects of a scientific nature" in the Three Towns.

> "In these towns there is a large, intelligent and active population; and among the working classes, from whom the majority of the members of those societies ought necessarily to be drawn, there are many who only require a rallying point to create a Mechanics' Institute which shall rival in excellence and utility, most institutions of the kind in the country." (12)

The following week the newspaper carried a reply from "Homo", who strongly supported the idea of a mechanics' institute but doubted whether working men could organise themselves adequately; it would be necessary to look to the higher and middle classes for the initiation of the movement. He referred at length to Lord Brougham's pamphlet on the education of the people to support his view (13). The same edition of the newspaper carried a second letter from "Amicus", who described the Glasgow Mechanics' Institute from Professor Ure's report of 1821. The next edition of the paper brought another person into the discussion, in the shape of R. Burnet of Devonport. He was very pleased to read "Amicus"'s letter, for a knowledge of mechanics was essential to society (14). He believed Devon was backward in applying the science, and this gave advantages to strangers who could apply it. He believed it was the duty of capitalists to foster native talent, and a mechanics' institute would provide a fine opportunity for them to do so by subscribing and giving modern books and equipment.

Moreover, he was willing to become personally involved, and proposed that a meeting of those people interested should be held on 7 March at the "Philosophical Room, Devonport, the Proprietors having kindly offered it for the occasion." (This was apparently the building of the Dock Literary and Philosophical Society, which disbanded shortly afterwards). This positive proposal by Mr. Burnet was followed by a third letter from "Amicus", in which he describes the pattern he would like to see established in the Three Towns, viz. the Newcastle-upon-Tyne model. It instructed mechanics by means of books, lectures and scientific meetings; the subscription was 12s. p.a.; and the Committee of Management consisted of both workmen and masters. Indeed, he believed that no institution of this kind could go on for long unless operatives had the principal management, and he quoted the case of Manchester where the low membership was, he claimed, due to their lack of involvement. Operatives, he wrote, would value an institution more if it was created by them.

The public meeting was held and was apparently a great success, for "hundreds assembled" (15), including seven hundred operatives. The Chairman was Mr. R. Rundle, and the meeting was opened by Mr. Burnet. He repeated the information and views already expressed in his letters, and stressed that the proposed institution would not interfere with either politics or religion. The next speaker was George Harvey, who now acknowledged himself to be "Amicus", and repeated his previous observations. Several other gentlemen spoke in favour, and discussion went on until the late hours, when the meeting was adjourned. It met again at the Devonport Town Hall on 10 March, when the attendance was again "very numerous and respectable." This time it was chaired by R. Burnet, who gave his estimate of the annual cost of running an institution.

	£. s. d.
Hire of rooms 2 nights per week	15. 0. 0.
Lecturer once per fortnight @ £2 per night	52. 0. 0.
Local lectures by operatives alternate weeks	5. 0. 0.
Fire and candles	5. 0. 0.
Collection of subscription	5. 0. 0.
Printing and advertising	15. 0. 0.
Wear and tear on apparatus	20. 0. 0.
Incidental expenses	3. 0. 0.
Total	120. 0. 0.

As for income, he estimated that the Three Towns' population of 60 - 70,000 would probably result in 300 members who could be expected to contribute as 3d. per week, giving an income of about £195; the balance of £75 after the maintenance charges had been met could be spent on building up a library. In addition, he estimated, there might be at least 100 apprentices, each contributing 2d. per week, giving an extra £43 per annum for the library and apparatus. George Harvey then proposed the first resolution:

> "That it is expedient to increase the means of acquiring Scientific Information amongst the Operatives of these Towns."

Once again he described mechanics institutes elsewhere, and pointed out that the advantage of a Three Towns institution would accrue not only to the individuals who took part, but also to the Navy, for "the far greater part of the mechanics of these towns were shipwrights." He also claimed that this would be the only mechanics' institute west of London. The resolution was adopted unanimously, as were the subsequent resolutions:

> "That, in order to produce this most desirable end, a Mechanics' Institute be formed: and that the Nobility, Gentry, Tradesmen, Operatives, and others, be earnestly invited to aid it by their Donations and Subscriptions: and that Books be opened at the different Banks, and Booksellers' Shops, for that purpose."
>
> "That this Institution be denominated the Plymouth, Devonport, and Stonehouse Mechanics' Institute."
>
> "That a Committee of Gentlemen be requested to prepare and digest a Plan for the formation and conduct of the Institute, by obtaining the Laws and Regulations of the most approved Institutions of the kind, and to Report the same to a future general Meeting; ..." (17)

At this point in the meeting, members were appointed to the Committee in a rotation calculated to be fair to each of the Three Towns, viz. two representatives from Plymouth, two from Devonport, and one from Stonehouse, and repeating this formula until 35 members had been elected. It is interesting to notice that the first two Plymouth representatives were Mr. H. Woollcombe and Rev. R. Lampen, and not Mr. George Harvey who had initiated the public debate; probably it would not have been politic to choose him, a man of acknowledged working class origin, before the leaders of the middle class from which financial support was expected. It will be remembered, too, that George Harvey was the man whose membership caused the split of the Plymouth Institution some years previously;

class, not ability, seems to have been important on this occasion too. However, Harvey was Plymouth's third choice for the Committee. The first choice for Devonport was R. Burnet. A Treasurer and Secretary were appointed, and subscription lists were then opend. Nearly £100 was received, with Mr. Burnet heading the list with £10 and Mr. Harvey second with £5. Other donations varied from 5s. to 3gns., plus one of £20. Gifts were also made in kind, with the editors of the local newspapers promising to publish the resolutions, and an offer from R. Williams to print 300 advertisement leaflets. The Library was initiated at the same time by promised donations of books, beginning with Smith's *Wealth of nations* from George Harvey, together with nearly twenty other works from various gentlemen, covering the subject fields of mechanics, mathematics, general science, astronomy, chemistry, mineralogy, classics and history. Scientific apparatus was also promised - a barometer, a compound microscope, a model of Davy's safety lamp, and four galvanic batteries.

Thus far, so good; but not long after this meeting had taken place some opposition arose to the idea of one establishment for the Three Towns. On 28 April the local press contained an advertisement headed "Plymouth Mechanics' Institute", which invited the public in general, but operatives in particular, to attend a meeting at the Guildhall on 2 May, "... to take into consideration the necessity and propriety of establishing a mechanics' institute in Plymouth" (18). A letter appeared in the same newspaper, shedding some light on this move; it was from J. Blewett, a shipbroker, accountant and auctioneer, who was also the influential Secretary and Accountant of the Exchange. He explained that the meeting had been requested "by several respectable persons" who supported the idea of a mechanics' institute, but felt that it would be of more use to Plymouth operatives if established at Plymouth. These people had refrained from attending the Devonport meetings, but had held two meetings in Plymouth, as the result of which they wanted a mechanics' institute on the "same principle as that now framing at Devonport". He invited Plymouth's chief magistrates, merchants, bankers, and principal inhabitants to give aid and patronage to the venture.

This appearance of rivalry could have had a disastrous effect on both movements at Devonport and Plymouth, but fortunately there were some very sensible people involved in the action. The meeting was held

at Plymouth Guildhall under the chairmanship of the Mayor, and some debate took place on the relative merits of one united institution and separate institutions (19). Mr. Prideaux preferred one united institution, arguing that one advantage would be the prevention of duplicate libraries, neither of which would be able to afford all the books they wanted, which could be purchased by the larger library. Even if the libraries of separate institutions agreed to lend books, there would be problems because of differences in their regulations, etc. Mr. Lampen thought there could be a compromise organisation by having subcommittees for each town under one unified management. Dr. Cookworthy commented that it appeared to be the general view that the greatest benefit from a unified organisation would be a more extensive library and collection of apparatus, and that the problem of distance could be overcome by providing reading rooms in each town, with lectures alternating between Plymouth and Devonport. He, however, was in favour, on balance, of separate institutions; for there must be duplicate books if two reading rooms were established, and similarly there must be duplication of apparatus which could not be continually transported between the towns; besides which, as a medical man, he felt that it was undesirable for men to have to walk two miles to lectures after working all day. Dr. Cookworthy's commonsense argument apparently struck home. But there still remained the important issue of the relationship with the organisation which had just been set up at Devonport with the title "Plymouth, Devonport and Stonehouse Mechanics' Institute." A number of gentlemen from the latter's Committee were present at the meeting, and a deputation retired from the meeting to confer on the issue. The outcome was a friendly agreement to go ahead as separate institutions, with good wishes and promises of mutual cooperation. The general meeting was resumed, and the Plymouth Mechanics' Institute was established with a Committee of 24 members to frame rules and regulations; George Harvey was one of them. A Treasurer and Secretary were elected, and subscription lists were opened. Over £133 was promised at the meeting, including a magnificent £100 from Charles Greaves. Seven people promised a total of sixteen works, mostly scientific, to begin the library (20).

Thus, both Devonport and Plymouth acquired mechanics' institutes within three months in early 1825, the first in the Southwest, and both libraries date from the foundation meetings.

6.2 DEVONPORT AND STONEHOUSE MECHANICS' INSTITUTE

The decision to establish separate mechanics' institutes for Plymouth and Devonport did not cause any delays in the arrangments which had been made at the Devonport meetings, although there had to be some modifications to the plans. The word "Plymouth" was dropped from the title, and on 6 May, only four days after the Plymouth meeting, the Secretary of the formerly unified organisation issued a notice informing all would-be members of the Devonport and Stonehouse Mechanics' Institute that they should let him have their names before 10 May, when the adjourned meeting would be held to appoint officers and a committee (21). The notice also invited donations of books and apparatus to be sent to the Secretary, and offers of books and apparatus for sale should also be sent to him, stating the lowest price. The meeting on 10 May was held at the Town Hall under the chairmanship of Mr. Rodd, an attorney and prominent civic official, who was elected President. Four Vice-Presidents were elected, including R. Burnet, who was thereafter referred to as the founder of the Institution, and an unspecified number of members of the Committee, of whom threequarters were operative mechanics (22). Copies of the *Laws* were distributed, which suggests that other meetings had perhaps been held by the united Committee originally charged with the duty of preparing the rules and regulations. It was decided to leave the appointment of the Treasurer and the Secretaries to the new Committee. It was reported that 130 members had already joined, and it was decided that the lists would remain open until 25 May, after which any new members would have to be proposed by two members and be elected into membership. Further donations were reported, including £1 from the mechanics of the Joiners Shop in the Dockyard. Arrangments for the Library were left to the Committee; Mr. Burnet offered the loan of 150 volumes, and a local Member of Parliament expressed his intention of donating 45 volumes of the *Transactions of the Society for the encouragement of arts, manufactures and commerce* (3).

Matters progressed quickly. The Institution seems to have taken over the former rooms of the Dock Literary and Philosophical Society in Fore St., for that is where they held their Committee meetings and where they assembled on 1 June, when nearly 300 members paid their quarterly subscription and received their admission card (Fig.26)(24). On 8 June the Library was opened for the first time, with a stock of

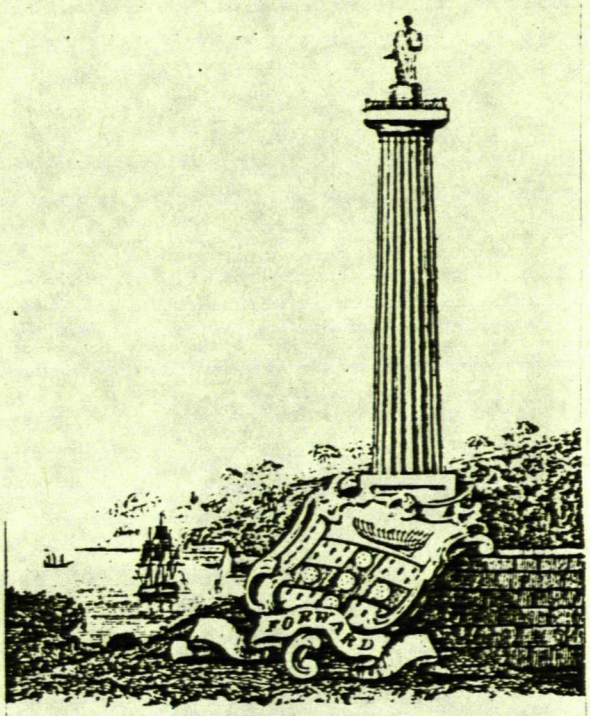


Fig. 26 Devonport & Stonehouse Mechanics' Institute card.

Fig. 27 Devonport Mechanics' Institute. Exterior.

500 volumes which included 100 loaned by J. Coles of the Manor Office (25), and possibly some of the volumes which R. Burnet promised to loan. The enthusiastic response of three hundred members was almost as large a number as had originally been envisaged from the Three Towns together, and the income augured well for the Library bookfund. On 1 July the Secretary advertised for booksellers to send him their tenders, based on the expectation that Library expenditure would be £60 - £100 p.a., including £16 p.a. for periodicals. Books had to be forwarded or delivered to the Secretary in perfect condition and carriage free; periodicals had to have cartridge paper backs or covers; and accounts must be rendered quarterly (26). It seems certain that the Library was among the sufferers when the Institution lost £100 in a bank failure in 1825 (27), but perhaps this loss was minimised by the continued increase of membership, which reached over 500 in 1826 (28). Richard Burnet described the young institution and its Library in his pamphlet which was published in 1826:

> "A library is open 3 nights a week, books on all subjects, and all the best periodicals, may be seen and taken home, and the various lectures included, for 3d. per week, or 2d. for the junior branches under 20.
>
> This infant establishment already takes in the following periodicals regularly; and as the funds of the Institution increase so will the accessions to that number be augmented:
>
> > *Westminster review, Edinburgh review, Quarterly review, Blackwood's magazine, Repertory of patents, Eclectic review, Literary magnet, London Mechanics' magazine, Monthly magazine, New monthly magazine, Plymouth Mechanics' magazine, Imperial magazine, Hone's Everyday book, Panoramic miscellany.*
>
> ... it is already the best library in the town. ... Among the members, upwards of 500 are to be found of all classes of society ..." (29)

The office of Librarian was established very early, and was probably an annually elected post although the first holder, G. Turner appears in 1825 (30), 1828 (31) and 1830 (32, 33), which suggests some continuity in that office. Another source for 1828 gives E. Kent and J. Jude as the Librarians (34), and J. Jude and G. Turner in 1830 (35). The natural explanation would seem to be that the task of opening the Library on three nights per week was more than one man could reasonably cope with and that the duties were shared. In 1830 the Library was described as "well arranged and continually increasing" (36).

The initial years of enthusiasm were followed by a few years of decline. A local newspaper's editorial (37)in 1836 recounted how at first hundreds had flocked to the lectures, and availed themselves "with avidity" of the Library, but the novelty wore off and left a small number of steady supporters. The membership had dropped to 100, of whom ten were honorary members and about thirty were junior members, so that the income had dropped considerably. The editorial attributed some blame to Lord Brougham's emphasis on leaving the management as much as possible to the mechanics; therefore gentlemen held aloof; but, the editor pointed out, it is possible to support without interfering. The benefits of lending and reference libraries and reading rooms were not the only benefits which were desirable besides lectures. Classes had been held at first in mechanics, drawing and French, but these had been given up until recently, and the new intention was to start eight classes: English grammar, drawing, mathematical and physical science, general literature and languages (French, Italian, German and Latin), chemistry mineralogy and geology, shorthand, natural history, jurisprudence and political economy. The editorial mentioned the Library as being "one of the best, if not the first, possessed by any mechanics' institute in the kingdom", but regretted that the low funds had meant very few new works being added recently except the periodicals. A directory of the same year, 1836, provides further details of the Library (38). It had grown into a a useful collection of about 2,800 volumes, which was large for a mechanics' institute library. The stock consisted of 1,400 science volumes, 300 literature, 500 history, 400 travel and 176 periodical volumes. The high percentage of science is interesting, for this was to change dramatically within a decade. The Library was smaller than the contemporary Devonport Civil and Military Library, but probably had a much larger scientific stock and was far cheaper than the latter, which was still a middle class establishment. The Mechanics' Institute was the only serious opportunity within the financial and social means of the majority of working class operatives, of whom there were so many at Devonport and Stonehouse. Their low membership might be partly explained by the gradual decline of the Dockyard itself and the laying off of large numbers of the labour force, which reached its nadir in about 1842; the novelty, too, had worn off; and the incentive to read and learn had not yet arrived in the form of new technologies of steam-engined ships and iron-clad battleships. It looks very much as though it was the middle class which came to the

rescue of the Institution before the Dockyard expansion which doubled its employees in five years. Perhaps it was the new range of classes and lectures from 1836 onwards which proved attractive to the middle classes, at least in their lower ranks and particularly among the tradesmen. There must have been some prospect of future success for a decision to be taken to erect a building in Duke St. for the Mechanics' Institute. The building cost was raised in 1,500 £2 shares at 5% interest, which probably put the Institution in debt to a majority of middleclass shareholders, and the new premises were opened in 1844. The building contained a lecture hall, a museum room, classroom, committee room, reading room, and residential accommodation for a Librarian (39). This immediately caused a jump in membership by 109 persons to 258 in March 1844, although the building was not opened until 30 July! One of the activities carried out before the move into the new accommodation was a review of the Library; the half-yearly meeting of the Institute in March 1844 learned that consideration was being given to means of extending and improving the Library, and that it was undergoing a complete revision (40). It appears that one of the improvements was the provision of a separate reading and newsroom, which the old accommodation had not been large enough to provide in addition to the general library accommodation. In order to help to finance the cost of the new service, the Institution decided to charge a separate subscription (41) of 10s. p.a. for members and 15s. p.a. for non-members to use the reading and newsroom. It seems that the Library was housed separately and remained free of charge to members, and it was made clear in the account of the Institution published shortly after its opening that the subscriptions for the Newsroom would be as low as were compatible with the "necessary expenditure" (42).

At the opening ceremony for the new building, the Secretary of the Institution reminded the members that the original intention of Mechanics' Institutes was that they should be confined to "practical men and mechanics" but this had proved to be too limited and had failed. It had overlooked the need for recreation and amusement; but the paramount object should not be lost sight of. This seems to mark a positive change in the policy of the Institution, and explains the changes made in the Library over the next few years. Certainly the membership of the Institution increased quite dramatically and funds began flowing in

again, including a personal donation of 100 gns. and an annual subscription of 10 gns. from Edward St. Aubyn. In 1846 there were 450 members, of whom many were ladies. The attendance at lectures was reported to be about 30% mechanics and 30% ladies in 1846; the subscriptions had been reduced to 10s. and 8s. per annum for senior and junior members respectively; class fees were 20s. per annum; and about 10% of the income was spent on book purchase for the Library, which was used by 50% of the members (43). The increasing membership is attested in 1849 by the statistics given in the *Report of the Select Committee on Public Libraries 1849*, which recorded that there were 650 members, and the class of persons using the Institution was described as "tradesmen", who paid quarterly subscriptions of 2s. and 2s. 6d.; the note added that "females" could belong, but gave no indication of their number.(44) Hudson is more explicit in his book published in 1851 (45), for he recorded that membership had risen to about 825 in 1850, including 25 honorary members and about 120 females; about 200, i.e. less than 25%, were working men. Both sources quoted the Library as having an annual issue of about 18,000, and Hudson quotes the stock as about 3,000 volumes.

The new building was not large enough to accommodate the greatly increased membership and the expanded activity, so in 1850 a new wing was added. Its opening was marked by a major Exhibition on such a large scale that the Commissioners of the Great London Exhibition of 1851 came to investigate and report upon its arrangement and organisation in order to benefit their arrangements. The displays covered all kinds of industrial, scientific and fine arts subjects, with some emphasis still being attached to the local aspects of engineering and naval architecture. Prizes began to be awarded from this time by the Institution for essays and inventions, encouraging local initiative; so that although the activities of the Institution were now of a much more popular kind than previously, it had not lost sight completely of the "mechanical arts".

The extension to the building had resulted in a large lecture hall capable of holding over 1,000 people, a newsroom, library and museum, committee room, and Librarian's apartments. The newspaper account of the building and opening ceremony includes the following description of the Library:

"In the interior there is upon the ground floor, towards

> the street, a library 60 feet long and 15 high, or rather three rooms connected with each other by two large open arches. Of these divisions only the two end ones are for books, the middle one being intended for a museum." (46)

The prospectus describes the Library as having nearly 3,000 volumes, with reference and lending sections. It was open from 12 - 2 and 6 - 10 except on Sundays and lecture evenings, and periodicals such as *Edinburgh review, Western review, Blackwoods magazine, Mechanics' magazine,* etc. were available on the library tables. The Newsroom was open from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m., and was available for a subscription of 2s. 6d. per quarter (47).

The changes which were taking place generally in the Institution from 1844 onwards made it necessary to make changes in the Library. In 1847 a paid Librarian was appointed in place of the former honorary arrangements, and Samuel Hutchings was appointed (48). A paid servant of the Institution could not be a member of its Committee, and so by 1852 the Committee had set up a Library and Museum Sub-Committee to manage the Library and supervise the Librarian's work (49). A set of library rules has survived from 1852, from which some details of the daily administration can be reconstructed. The Library was open at lunchtimes and evenings, 12 - 2 and 6 - 10, the hours which working men might be expected to find most convenient. No member could borrow more than one work, a maximum of three volumes, at one time, and the loan period was fourteen days unless renewed; books could be reserved, also periodicals. The arrangement for periodical loans was that a member could reserve a periodical during an evening, but not take it away until 9.45 p.m., on condition that it was returned by 6 p.m. next evening, on pain of 2d. fine. All books had to be returned by 1 June each year for stocktaking, on pain of 6d. fine per volume. These arrangements are very similar to many which operate in public and academic libraries today; there is no reference to format of the book, as in some other local libraries. Everything was simplified and standard. The Librarian was not a fulltime appointment, and it seems likely that there must have been a janitor who supervised the Newsroom and the security of the building, although this is not known for certain.

During the late 1840s the rapid success of the Devonport and Stonehouse Mechanics' Institute seems to have encouraged the people

of Stonehouse to establish a separate Mechanics' Institute; and from 1847 the Devonport and Stonehouse Mechanics' Institute became the Devonport Mechanics' Institute. It is under that name that the earliest surviving catalogue of the Library was published. There had been at least one earlier catalogue, published in 1844 (50), but nothing is known of its contents or arrangements. The 1852 edition (51) contained over 3,250 volumes arranged alphabetically by author under thirteen subject classes, some of which were further subdivided as shown in Table 21 . Some interesting features emerge from an examination of the contents of this *Catalogue*, not least the relative importance of the different subjects are indicated by their representation in the stock. Classes A to D, which might be presumed to be the most useful to shipwrights, coppersmiths and engineers working in the Dockyard, the originally intended users of the Institute, form barely 10% of the stock. Class I, novels, comprised about 16%, and examination of the details reveals that these works were, with few exceptions, published since 1844; this was one of the classes which must have been built up by the "large sum in the purchase of books" spent in 1847 (52) and the 253 volumes added in 1847-8 (53). Class H, history and biography, also shows a significant increase in recent publications. The bias towards general and middle-class taste is unmistakable.

In 1844 the Dockyard School for Apprentices was established, and might have had some small effect on the membership of the Institute but this seems unlikely, for the apprentices would have formed only junior members of the Institute because of their age. The impression is given of a more widespread decline in membership from about 1852 onwards, although even in 1862 the actual membership figures seem quite respectable: 65 life and honorary members, 472 senior members, 195 juniors, and others 7, making a total of 739, although not all of them were paying annual subscriptions. At the same time as this membership was reported, it was also said that the officers could to some extent account for a falling off of members because of the foundation of other societies and associations. This seems to have referred to various working men's organisations and mutual improvement societies. By 1863 there was a definite concern being shown over the loss of members, and it was determined to make a positive effort to recruit more members with "no social distinction" being shown, as well as to

Table 21. Devonport Mechanics' Institute Library, 1852. Stock and organisation.

Class	Subject, and subdivisions		Vols.	%
A	Mathematics, arithmetic, etc.		41	1.25
B	Natural philosophy :	general treatises	38	
		mechanics	2	
		astronomy and use of globes	17	
		miscellaneous	27	2.55
C	Chemistry		26	0.8
D	Science and the arts:	general	54	
		architecture	17	
		naval architecture	104	5.35
E	Natural history :	general	65	
		geology and mineralogy	12	
		botany	22	
		physiology and medical	32	
		miscellaneous	12	4.4
F	Moral and political philosophy		140	4.3
G	Geography, topography, voyages and travels		161	4.9
H	History :	history	376	
		biography	255	19.3
I	Novels, tales, etc.		504	15.4
K	Poetry		171	5.2
L	Periodical literature		546	16.7
M	Dictionaries and encyclopaedias		110	3.65
N	Miscellaneous works		534	16.2
			3,266	100.0

try and reduce the Institution's liabilities, for the income from subscriptions and rent was insufficient to maintain it (53). Funds did not permit the improvement of the supply of materials to the reading room, which was well supplied with periodicals but had no newspapers (54). The new Committee which was in office in October 1863 decided to act upon recommendations which had already been made by its predecessors in view of the need for economies, and advised the half-yearly general meeting to adopt a new system, which involved the Librarian. The post of Librarian was to become fulltime and to include extra duties, in particular the task of trying to enlist new members and to obtain subscription arrears. The Librarian, Samuel Hutchings, was offered the post on those terms in lieu of his former terms of employment, but he declined them and consequently his employment was terminated, after sixteen years of service with the Institution. The post was advertised on the new terms, and Josiah Clark (or Clarke) was appointed(55) At the time of his appointment the membership consisted of 330 senior members, 66 junior members, and 65 life and honorary members, the latter not being active subscribers as they had made donations carrying the privilege of life membership or other contribution warranting honorary status.

For a short while it seems as though the efforts of the able and energetic Josiah Clark were successful in increasing both the membership and finance; and the situation must have been helped considerably when the Devonport Civil and Military Library foundered, handing over its Library and Museum to the Institution on condition that its proprietors became life members. Although the life membership condition added to the existing numbers of non-paying members, it seems likely that some of the subscribers from the Devonport Civil and Military Library transferred their subscriptions to the Institution, and at least the collapse of the proprietary library removed the largest competitor in the town. It seems likely that the Mechanics' Institute Library was doubled in stock by the addition of the proprietary library, although the individual stock figures are not known; the joint library stock was over 8,000 volumes.

Unfortunately any improvement in the membership and finances of the Institution were only temporary. Other centres of literary and musical activities had sprung up not only in Devonport but elsewhere in the Three Towns, with which there was now easy communication and

transport. There were art and science classes, public lectures, and many mutual improvement societies. It is likely, too, that the discussion at Plymouth about rate-supported libraries was beginning to come to the attention of some of the residents of Devonport. The old Mechanics' Institute Library might have a stock of over 10,000 volumes in 1869, with daily access from 1 - 4 and 6 - 10, but the amount of new stock which had been added over the last few years was small and not sufficient to sustain the interest of the users. Despite further economies, including making the indefatigable Josiah Clark Secretary as well as Librarian in 1870, the debts mounted up. A particular problem was the interest which still had to be paid on the loan raised to erect the building and its extension nearly thirty years previously, and the gap between income and essential expenditure widened as the membership declined. An attempt had been made to increase popular support by adding newspapers to the reading room, starting in a small way in 1861 and increasing the number of papers until in 1869 the room was advertised as taking the leading periodicals and newspapers, but this did not work; in 1879 a desperate last attempt seems to have been made by adding several hundred volumes to the Library, which then consisted of over 12,000 volumes (56), but collapse was imminent.

On 4 January 1881 a special meeting was called of the members of the Institution, in order to sanction arrangements to transfer the building and the Library to the Town Council, on condition that the Council would pay off the liabilities and convert it into a free public library(57) This had become necessary because the subscriptions from the paying membership of about 300 people was insufficient to keep the Institution running; in the current year there had been no money to pay the interest due on the building loans, the debts consisted of £3,000 and the credit was only £30. The Secretary reported that many members would not pay their subscriptions because they wanted a rate-supported public library It seems likely that this attitude had been coloured by the success of the Plymouth Free Public Library which had been established in 1876 and was well patronised. It also seems likely that behind the scenes the adoption of the Acts at Devonport in 1880 had been in anticipation of the collapse and availability of the Mechanics' Institute and its Library, for the events happened very conveniently. The special meeting had no alternative but to approve the arrangements for the liquidation of the Devonport Mechanics' Institute, and the building shortly became the Devonport Free Public Library.

6.3 PLYMOUTH MECHANICS' INSTITUTE

Arrangements for the formation of a separate Plymouth Mechanics' Institute forged ahead immediately after the decision at the meeting on 2 May 1825 not to form a united Three Towns organisation. A Committee of twenty four members was deputed to frame a set of rules and regulations, and a Secretary and Treasurer were appointed. Donations of books and money were promised, and the Institute had effectively commenced before the close of that same meeting on 2 May (58). The Plymouth members of the united organisation received their subscriptions back and were able to apply these to the new Institution (59). The provisional Committee finished drafting its set of rules and regulations at a meeting on 16 May (60), and a full meeting of members was held in the Guildhall on 30 May to receive the document and to elect officers and an official Committee (61); it is this latter meeting which is later quoted as the date of the official foundation of the Plymouth Mechanics' Institute (62). The Mayor of Plymouth, Edmund Lockyer, played a major part in the foundation of the Institution, and was elected its President; Mr. Charles Greaves, who had generously given £100 and some books, was one of the four Vice-Presidents. It was suggested that perhaps two of the four Vice-Presidents should be mechanics, but the meeting generally considered that the people in that office should be conversant with public business, experience which mechanics lacked, and so the main officers were prominent names from the civic and mercantile life of the town (63). Mr. Lockyer, in his capacity of Mayor, was able to secure accommodation at the Guildhall for the meetings of the Committee and members, and also a secure place in which to keep books and apparatus for the time being, an announcement which was received with satisfaction at the foundation meeting. It was in the Guildhall that the Committee met a few days later, on 6 June, and included in its business the need for a librarian; it unanimously elected George Moore, Dispenser at Plymouth Dispensary, with the interesting comment that it was an "appointment for which he is well qualified"(64) . This suggests that perhaps he was involved in some way with the Plymouth Medical Society Library which was located at the Dispensary, although he was not its Librarian, and it was the Matron who issued its books (vid. inf. Chapter 9.3). The optimistic hope was expressed that the Library would be opened to members the following week, but it took a little longer. On 20 June members met at the Guildhall to receive their membership cards, which

would admit them to the Library, and the "Laws of the Library" were read at the meeting for approval (65); unfortunately no description or copy seems to have survived. The Library already held 400 volumes, but it seems that one hundred of them were only on loan for one year, from R. Cole of Devonport (66); (it is conjectured that perhaps it was the same gentleman who loaned a similar number of volumes to the Devonport Mechanics' Institute, or his close relation, for the surname is the same although the initials differ in the newspaper accounts). A "great number" of volumes had been presented by Mr. Greaves, and about thirty volumes from Mr. W. Burt, the first Secretary of the Chamber of Commerce.

The object of the new Institution was "the promotion of useful knowledge among the members in various branches of science and art" (67) and several means were adopted to achieve this object. The Library and Reading Room were prominent intentions, but there was also to be a museum, and regular lectures, and other means of associating together, all for a weekly payment of three pence (soon quoted as 3s. 3d. per quarter). Membership consisted of four categories: life membership was conditional upon a donation of £10 in cash or £20 in books; periodic membership was the ordinary membership; and there was provision for honorary and corresponding members. Evidently the initial attraction was considerable and membership swelled beyond that which was convenient for the continued use of the Guildhall. A site was obtained in Princess Square, and the architect John Foulston drew up the plans for the building, which was opened in December 1827. Edmund Lockyer generously loaned £800 of the £1,100 cost, and Mr. Greaves is reputed to have given generously also (68). The building was apparently a simple and fairly small one, consisting of a lecture room, a library and a newsroom, but for a while this must have been ample space because after 1830 the membership began to decline. A summary of the Institution's history in an editorial in 1868 attributed this decline to two reasons; the first was that the attraction had diminished because many of the new inventions which had excited the original interest had by that time passed into practical use by the mechanics; the second reason was that the original object and activities were too rigid and narrow in their scope (69). It is not easy to determine the truth of the matter from the scraps of evidence which survive about the early Institution, but some picture of its activities can be formed. The year was divided

into the main, winter, season, from November to April, and the summer season from May to October. In the winter season lectures were held on Wednesday evenings, and, in 1836 at least, classes were running in Chemistry, French and Drawing (70). The Library consisted in 1836 of about 1,000 volumes, and was open on Tuesday and Friday evenings from 8 - 10 p.m. (71). The early librarians appear to have been honorary librarians, almost certainly elected annually although there seems to have been some continuity of a few names; it seems, too, as though the duties were shared. In 1828 the librarians were T. Waye, J. Yeo, and W. Waye (72); in 1830, T. Waye and J. Yeo (73). It seems possible that a change had occurred by 1836; in that year the Librarian was named in a directory as Francis Drew (74), who was also a French teacher and mineralogist. In 1839 Mr. Drew died, and a brief press announcement makes it clear that he was the Librarian of the Plymouth Mechanics' Institute (75). On 12 October 1839 it was announced that:

> "On Friday last, Mr. G. Bartlett was elected Librarian, French Teacher, etc., as the successor of the late Mr. Drew." (76)

This does seem to suggest that the office had become a paid appointment, although probably not fulltime; and certainly it is difficult thereafter to discover anything about the librarians, whereas the former honorary librarians were usually quoted with the other officers of the Committee. The only other known pre-1850 librarian seems to be Jas. Bradshaw in 1844 (77). The volume of library work does not seem to have been particularly heavy, for the issues in the winter season 1840-1 was only 1,200, or perhaps about 25 per evening (78). At the same time it was recommended that the Library should receive more attention and an attempt should be made to supply more new and useful works. Members were reminded that they could donate books from their own shelves! The same account of the half-year 1840-1 reported that Mr. G. Wightwick (a wellknown local architect) had given three volumes of the *Library of fine arts*, the Committee had purchased Ure's *Dictionary of arts and sciences*, and the periodicals which were regularly received were: *Pinnock's Guide to knowledge*, *Saturday magazine*, *Penny magazine*, *Penny cyclopaedia*, and *Mirror* (79). Stock-building was very slow, and had only reached about 1,550 volumes by April 1847 although the previous year had seen an input of about £65 on new books (80). Issues had increased to 3,680 for the winter session, over three times the number issued six years earlier. A survey of mechanics' institutes in 1846 included a return from the Plymouth Mechanics' Institute which stated

that about 7% of the annual income was spent on books for the Library, and that the Library was used by 100% of the membership. The average audiences at lectures contained about 10% mechanics, 25% ladies; and the classes which were being run at that time were Music, Drawing, French, Natural science, Mutual improvement, and Elocution. (81) This suggests that the Institution was already a much more liberal and middle-class organisation than had been intended originally. Ladies had been admitted to the lectures since 1833, but had apparently not been admitted yet as members.

The decline in membership had brought membership levels to about only 100 by 1844 (82), and drastic measures were required. It was decided to halt the decline by widening the sphere of activities and by admitting ladies as members (83). The result was a dramatic rise in membership to about 400 and then to 1,000 by 1850 (84). The *Report of the Select Committee on Public Libraries 1849* quoted the membership as 480, and described the class of persons as "middleclasses" (85). Hudson cast further light on this:

> "The distinguishing features in this Institution are the support which it has received from the ladies, who form nearly one half of the society, or four hundred of its subscribers; and its financial prosperity, notwithstanding its low rate of subscription ..." (86)

The subscriptions had been reduced to 3s. and 2s. per quarter in 1847, apparently as part of the campaign to increase the membership. The actual membership figure reported by the Committee in April 1850 was 836 (87), a tremendous contrast with five years earlier. In fact, the membership was now so large, the buildings were not adequate to hold it, and a new building was planned as a matter of some urgency. Capital was raised by shares, £10 for gentlemen and £7 for ladies, paying 5% interest until redeemed, and a new building was erected on the site of the old one in Princess Square, the Institution taking up residence meantime at the Freemasons' Hall (88). The new building was opened in September 1851, and consisted of a large lecture hall on the first floor, and a classroom, library and reading room, and Librarian's apartments (two rooms) on the ground floor (89). An effort was made to increase the Library's stock, and in October 1851 it was reported that there had been £50 spent on the purchase of nearly 300 volumes and that several donations had been received. It was recommended that extra newspapers and periodicals should be taken in the reading room (90).

The Institution was now described, probably with local bias, as

"... one of the largest and most successful in the country." (91).

Certainly the membership remained for several years at a high level, fluctuating from 700 in the summer, and 1,100 in the winter. In 1868 the 1,100 members consisted of 350 Senior members, and 750 Ladies and Junior members, the latter memberships being on exactly the same terms. The Library had apparently expanded both in stock and usage, for in that same year it was described as between five and six thousand volumes, of science, art and general literature, with average issues of about 1,000 per week. The reading room held a wide range of London and provincial newspapers and magazines (92). From 1855 the Institution had been in receipt of the publications of the Patent Office (93), although this does not seem to have been much publicised; the patents seem to have been allowed to accumulate in the basement and became something of an embarrassment, which the Institution was pleased to transfer to the Plymouth Free Public Library in later years (vid. inf. Chapter 7).

The last thirty years of the Institution and its Library are not well documented, but a few glimpses are given. In 1876 it was reported at a half-yearly meeting that the Library had been throughly examined and that about 1,500 books had been discarded on account of their delapidated condition. Evidently the opening of the Free Public Library in that year had acted as something of a spur to the Institution to ensure that its Library was as well looked after as possible, and something of a clean sweep had been necessary of what must have been about 20% of its total stock in that close examination. In the discussion arising from the report, a member voiced the opinion that the Library ought to be as good as, if not better than the Free Library, but the Committee believed that this could not even be achieved if all of the income were to be spent on the Library. There seems to have been some concern lest members should be lost to the new rival. At the same meeting an indication of the financial situation of the Institution was given, from which it appears that although £1,581 had been paid off on the loan charges on the building, considerable sums were still owed. (94) The visit of the Library Association to Plymouth in 1885 gave rise to a useful description of the Library in that year, when it contained about 8,000 volumes:

> "History, biography and general literature are fairly represented, but fiction predominates. It is open to

> subscribers, of whom there are about 700, every weekday from 3 to 5 and 7 to 10 p.m., except on Tuesday evening. There is a news-room supplied with newspapers and magazines open all day to members. The subscription is 10s. per annum and 7s. for ladies and junior members. There is a MS. list of the books arranged alphabetically, but no catalogue. About £25 per annum is spent in the purchase of books and periodicals." (95)

In 1887-8 the bookfund produced 130 volumes of additions to the Library (96).

A library which opened for the considerable number of hours indicated in 1885 and which had a stock of 8,000 volumes must have had a Librarian, and from 1868 a few names emerge after the blank of about twenty-five years. In 1868 Mrs. Bradshaw was the Librarian (97), but in the following year F. and S. Hoar were named as Librarians and continued as such until at least 1875, with F. Hoar being named in 1880 (98). By 1884 F. Johnson had become Librarian, until at least 1888 (99), after which only the name of the Secretary is given in the directories; it is possible that the Secretary was also Librarian, as at Devonport Mechanics' Institute, but no evidence has been found to support this.

The decline in membership which occurred gradually over the next few years is probably attributable to a combination of reasons, particularly the general growth of competing organisations providing popular lectures and entertainments. The Borough Librarian noted in about the late 1880s that:

> "The institution is very popular, although since the establishment of the Free Library the number of members has been somewhat reduced." (100)

Whatever the reasons, the fact was that support declined, and in 1896 the financial position of the Institution was most unsatisfactory. A local newspaper editorial outlined the growth and importance of the Plymouth Mechanics' Institute and recommended that readers should take advantage of some of its facilities such as the reading room and library, in order that the unparalleled programmes of weekly entertainment which it provided in the winter months should not be lost to the town (101). It was clearly recognised at this time that unless more support came from the public, the Institution would need to close. That support did not materialise, and in July 1898 it was regretfully decided by members to wind up the affairs of the Institution (102). In December that year the building was sold by public auction for £5,400 (103) which enabled

the debts to be discharged and left the Institution with considerable capital in hand. Meantime, the members had decided to approach the Plymouth Institution with a view to an amalgamation, on certain terms. The Mechanics' Institution would provide £2,000 for a library to be built on a site at the rear of the Athenaeum, of which £300 was to be a building maintenance fund, and about £200 spent on new books. It appears, from later events, that they had also reserved at least some of their old Library stock and furniture for the new building (104). Another £2,000, or thereabouts, was to be vested in a joint body of trustees, and used to defray the difference in subscription rates for those members who transferred into the Plymouth Institution but continued to pay their former rates of 10s. and 7s. per annum. These main terms were agreed by the members of the Plymouth Institution, and the Plymouth Mechanics' Institute formally ceased to exist in 1899. However, the transfer of its membership,which was predominantly female, and the requirement that a library should be established of a popular character, ensured that the impact of the Plymouth Mechanics' Institute made a very deep impression on the affairs of the Plymouth Institution, which has been described in Chapter 5.2.

6.4 STONEHOUSE MECHANICS' INSTITUTE

The upward trend in the memberships of the Plymouth and Devonport based mechanics' institutes in the late 1840s seems to have encouraged a few people at Stonehouse to consider establishing their own institution. After all, the population had now increased to about ten thousand, and there was no public institution there yet of any kind.

> "Stonehouse is, for its own interest, unfortunately situated, as it has on either side a large and populous town. From its locality it is necessarily a second-rate town, ... Stonehouse affords a very large amount of support to most of the institutions in the neighbouring towns. Could it not apply its own funds primarily to its own aggrandizement,to increase its own importance, ... Why should the youth of Stonehouse be obliged to go nearly a mile and a half to hear a lecture of a winter's night? Why should parents permit such an hiatus to be felt in Stonehouse? Why, if they wish to read the periodicals, must they go to their sister towns?" (105)

The earliest reference to a mechanics' institute at Stonehouse seems to be an account in the local press of a preliminary meeting in

early January 1847 (106). It was attended mainly by tradesmen, mechanics and young people, and there was general agreement that a separate institute was desirable for Stonehouse because of its growth in population and the increasing desire of its inhabitants for knowledge. A steering committee of twenty people was appointed to make appropriate arrangements and report back to the general meeting. By the end of January between 200 and 300 prospective members had made their interest known (107) and an official Committee of twentyfive members was elected in early February, from which it appears that the Stonehouse Mechanics' Institute was now formally in existence. An editorial dated 10 February 1847 offered some advice to the young organisation:

> "The present Institute is situated between two rivals, richer and consequently better able to offer inducements to the public, and whose affairs .... are carried on with great judgement. It will consequently be difficult to follow in their track. Another plan must be struck out, which can be very well done, as in spite of the name, the two Institutes in question are now more for the middle class than for the mechanic. In Plymouth, rarely is a mechanic seen in the lecture-room, ... and never in the library or reading-room; both of which are but little frequented. Devonport certainly offers much greater inducements, and is therefore more attractive. ... Yet, comparatively speaking, there are few of the working class, ... we think it could do the Mechanics' Institute at Stonehouse no harm to try for twelvemonths something less grand, more interesting, more comfortable, more chit-chatty than their contemporaries, ..." (108)

This well meant advice does not seem to have been followed, to judge by the programme of classes which suggests more of a middle-class flavour: French, Music, Drawing, Singing, Mathematics, Architectural drawing, and Natural history. These classes and meeting were held at first in a private house in Union St. (109), but the Institution wanted to have its own building like the other organisations. The financial situation made it impossible to achieve a completely separate building for themselves, but it was possible to participate in a collective solution. A special committee was appointed to make arrangements for the erection, on a good central site, of a large building which would serve Stonehouse as a Townhall, County Court, Police Station, Mechanics' Institute, and place for public meetings. The Lord of the Manor, the Earl of Mt. Edgcumbe, generously gave a site in fashionable Emma Place, provided the building stone, and also took £100 of the £1 shares which were issued to raise the necessary £4,500 capital (110). The result was that Stonehouse had acquired its new "Townhall" in 1850, although

as it could not be a true townhall, not being in an official borough, the building was named St. George's Hall. The Mechanics' Institute had formed only a part of the movement which had achieved the building, but they enjoyed the use of classrooms and a library and reading room. It seems to have become known and referred to as the Literary and Scientific Institute, rather than its first name of Stonehouse Mechanics' Institute.

The Institute was destined to have only a short existence, and very little information is available about it. The Select Committee on Public Libraries in 1849 included a return from Stonehouse in its survey of mechanics' institutes (111), from which it is learned that the main users were tradesmen, the subscription was 2s. 6d. per quarter, the Library contained 700 volumes, and issued 1,000 volumes per annum. Hudson (112) agrees with the 1849 statement of 250 members, but reports the Library as having 550 volumes and 1,500 annual issues.

The Institute obviously had to pay rent to the managers of St. George's Hall, although the actual amount is not known. Its income would have been only about £30 p.a. from 250 members @ 2s. 6d., which was a small sum on which to carry out a programme of lectures, classes and library, plus rent. It must have gone into debt virtually as soon as it moved into St. George's Hall, and by March 1854 the sum owing to the Directors of that property was over £50; their affairs were "considerably embarrassed" (113), and were probably wound up soon afterwards, although directories refer to their rooms in St. George's Hall as late as 1857 - almost certainly that was simply out of date information (114). The destination of the library volumes is completely unknown.

6.5 WORKING MEN'S ASSOCIATIONS

By the mid 1840s the mechanics' institutes had generally moved away from the original purpose of providing specifically for the needs of mechanics and other working men, and had become recognisable middle class institutions. In doing so, they had already failed to become the means whereby the working class could become a literate, reading section of the population, and a reaction set in, taking the form of a wave of organisations under many different names but broadly described as working men's associations. The intention of such organisations was that they would be founded by the working class for the working class, maintained by them, and managed by them, thus avoiding the problem of well-intentioned but interfering philanthropy which had backfired on the mechanics' institutes. The Three Towns took a contemporary part in the general trend, with a large number of organisations forming in the 1840s and the next two decades, under such names as "mutual improvement" or "mental improvement" societies, "working men's association", and similar titles. The number of working men's associations was sufficiently large, across the country, to establish a central organisation in London, the Working Men's Club and Institute Union; and even in 1896 there were still 520 clubs in membership with it, using its services such as a lending and reference library of 8,000 volumes from which the club libraries could borrow (115).

The problem with the majority of the working men's organisations was chiefly that they lacked funds; they often had a small membership and the subscriptions were necessarily low. Consequently it was difficult to provide the range of educational and recreational facilities for which the clubs were established, and many members became disenchanted when their expectations were not realised. Although the basic intention was that the clubs should be self-supporting, many only managed to survive in reality because of annual donations and gifts from wealthy patrons and philanthropists. One librarian who had first-hand knowledge of the working men's associations and their problems was W. H. K. Wright, Borough Librarian of Plymouth, who had previously worked for at least ten years as Secretary and Librarian to one of the largest clubs in the Three Towns. In 1877 he was invited to read the very first paper of the first Library Association Annual Conference, and chose as

his subject *The best means of promoting the free library movement in small towns and villages*; in the course of his paper he reviewed some of the previous types of library provision, including working men's clubs:

> "And what, as a rule, can be said of a Working Men's Club library? A few hundred volumes of odd books gathered together from the four corners of the town, without any attempt at judicious selection or systematic arrangement. A few books, perhaps, of a solid character, which have crept in quite by accident, but the majority of the volumes are mere outcasts from private collections - few which a student will care to read, none that a bibliophile would prize - antiquated editions of musty divinity, or obsolete scientific treatises, which have lain on the shelves of their former owners long enough to accumulate the dust of a generation, unknown, unread ..." (116)

No wonder the working man was disappointed, and the clubs often failed or lingered in a half dormant state.

By their very nature, many of these clubs were small and short-lived, the records of their existence are often scanty, and the records of their library provision even scarcer. A recent study by Lewis of the adult education movement in the Three Towns has shown that a very large number of working men's organisations existed in the area, but it is difficult to establish chronological links between organisations of the same name which existed at different dates. He found that at least ten organisations were founded between 1843, when the first one was recorded locally, and 1849, and in the following decades the numbers were: 1850-9 5, 1860-9 23, 1870-9 4, 1880-9 26 and 1890-9 11 (117). About half were connected with churches and chapels; in Plymouth, about 43% of the Anglican churches and 40% of the dissenting chapels had working men's groups of some kind; in Devonport the figures were 70% and under 20% respectively, and at Stonehouse 33% and 43%. Not every organisation which existed has necessarily survived in the records, so the interesting apparent emphasis on Anglican organisations can only be noted as interesting rather than significant. In most cases the surviving references contain no mention of libraries or reading rooms, but the few scraps of information which have come to light have been organised to present brief accounts in turn of Plymouth, Devonport and Stonehouse.

The earliest attempt in the Three Towns to provide the working men's needs for education, after the mechanics' institutes had failed,

was in Plymouth, where the PLYMOUTH MUTUAL INSTRUCTION SOCIETY was in existence in early 1843 (118). It is significant only because of being the first known, for although lectures were held there is no reference to a library or newsroom; the others which will be mentioned are exclusively those for which some library or reading room reference does exist.

The PLYMOUTH WORKING MEN'S MUTUAL IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION was established in 1847 in connection with the Plymouth Mechanics' Institute. It was formed

> " ... for the purpose of communicating instruction in reading, writing and arithmetic and other branches of useful knowledge, to those more especially who have not enjoyed the benefits of school education." (119)

It was open to men and youths over sixteen years old, for an entrance fee of 6d. and a weekly subscription of 1d. at first and 2d. per week by 1849. According to Hudson, there were 150 members in 1847 and 1848, and successful classes had been held in reading, writing, arithmetic and composition (120). The membership then dropped slightly, possibly because of the rise in subscriptions to 2d; in October 1851 there were 101 members, mostly apprentices, who had the use of the club facilities five evenings per week (121). There was a small library, from which 535 issues had been made in the previous year; it had consisted in 1849 of about 200 volumes of both literature and science, many of which had been presented by gentlemen of the town and neighbourhood; more such donations of "unwanted volumes" were welcomed because of "the eager desire which exists for perusing the works in the Library" (122). The Association had disappeared by 1864 (123).

LOWER ST. WORKING MEN'S ASSOCIATION was established in about 1858, primarily as a newsroom (124); it was also known as MR. ELDRED BROWN'S NEWSROOM FOR WORKING MEN, from the name of its main founder and patron. In 1862 it was open free of charge on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, from 7 - 9 p.m. (125), and had about eighty members. There was a "library" of 167 volumes in the reading room as well as the local and London daily papers. The last known reference was 1865 (126).

SHAFTESBURY COTTAGES WORKING MEN'S ASSOCIATION was in existence in 1861 (127) and continued until at least 1869 (128). In 1865 it had a library of about 600 volumes and a reading room (129), and the name of

the Librarian in 1868 and 1869 was W. Woodley (130).

ST. ANDREW'S WORKING MEN'S ASSOCIATION appears to have been the largest and longest lived organisation of its type in Plymouth. Established in December 1860, its purpose was:

> "... to provide for the working class instruction and amusement of a beneficial and elevating tendency" (131)

and it is interesting to find that its subscribers included four ladies. It provided lectures and classes in reading, writing, arithmetic, singing, drawing, French, science and art. It was this Association in which W.H.K. Wright held office as Secretary from 1865, and he almost certainly spent much of his time in connection with the library and newsroom and compiled the catalogue which was printed in 1876 (132); unfortunately no copy of that publication seems to have survived. The Association changed its name and moved its location to the Octagon where it was said to have a capacious reading room and library in 1872 (133). Apparently the Association declined after the introduction of free elementary education and the establishment of the rate supported public library, but lingered in some reduced form until 1887 (134).

Although the working men's associations included many young men, such as apprentices, some establishments were founded particularly for the younger group. A particularly successful one was KITTO WORKING LADS' INSTITUTE, which was established in about 1884 in Stillman St. Members had to be over fourteen years old, and the institute was open every evening from 7 - 10 p.m. for education and recreation. The education was largely of a practical and technical nature, such as shorthand, fretwork, mechanics, and seamanship. There was also a games room and a reading room.

> "For the studious-minded there is a small but useful library, to which Mrs. Tanner, of Portland Sq., recently gave two parcels of valuable volumes" (135)

Somewhere in Plymouth, and probably associated with an organisation similar to the one just described, was MRS. STIDSTON'S LIBRARY FOR WORKING LADS, of which a printed catalogue existed in the Local Department of the Plymouth Free Public Library in 1892 (135). The surname is unusual, so perhaps this lady was related to the draper of that name who was living in Plymouth in about 1850, according to local directories.

At Devonport a Dockyard School was established in 1844 and this provided compulsory education for the apprentices and voluntary education for other youths in the Dockyard trades; this might have had some effect on the extent to which basic literacy classes on the mutual improvement principle were established, but there was still plenty of scope for self help organisations among adults and youths at Devonport, where the mechanics' institute had also become largely a middle class institution as in Plymouth. The DEVONPORT MENTAL IMPROVEMENT SOCIETY was in existence in 1846-7, and held a tea in February 1846 to raise funds for a library (136). The DEVONPORT WORKING MEN'S INSTITUTE was established in November 1850, and met at the Temperance Hall in Fore St., where there was a library in 1852 (137). The DEVONPORT WORKING MEN'S ASSOCIATION was in existence in 1863, when it was "somewhat dependent upon public support" and was positively encouraging the patronage of the Lord of the Manor and gentry in the neighbourhood (138); an aside remark in an address, to the effect, "did the library here have a copy of Samuel Smiles' book?" shows that a library did exist in that year. In 1865 the annual meeting was told about new accommodation which was being prepared for the Association at Wood's Auction Rooms, Fore St., where the upper floor would be reading and bagatelle rooms. It was also reported that the Library had been increased by donations, and more donations were earnestly requested (139). An interesting point arising from the account of this meeting was that, although the aid of the gentry was being actively sought, it was emphasised that the committee affairs were in the hands of working men, so this appears to be a situation of harmonious cooperation and non-interference by the middle class philanthropists. The DEVONPORT WORKING LADS' INSTITUTE opened in November 1882, and had a range of educational and recreational activities. The subscription was 6d. per month, and the benefits were "a large reading room" and a "library", neither of which were described (140).

During the speeches which accompanied the demise of the Devonport Mechanics' Institute in 1881, reference was made not only to the general failure of the movement to provide for the needs of the working class, but a parallel was drawn with the failure which had also occurred among the working men's clubs. It was recalled that the Three Towns had a dozen such clubs, but that none remained in existence until that year (141). Although the statistics were not compatible

with those uncovered by Lewis (for there were clearly more than a dozen), it is interesting to learn that the impression existed in 1881 that organisations of that kind were already defunct.

Stonehouse is reputed to have had an early organisation for working men in the 1840s, which became linked with the Stonehouse Mechanics' Institute as the STONEHOUSE MUTUAL IMPROVEMENT CLASS (142), and possibly thereby sharing the former's library provision for it did not seem to have any of its own. Two years later, in September 1847, the STONEHOUSE WESLEYAN MUTUAL INSTRUCTION SOCIETY was established; it was not a typical working men's association, but rather a general mutual improvement society, consisting of Sunday School teachers who met every fortnight to listen to an improving paper read by a member. A library was formed as a natural corollary, and in 1850 it had 200 volumes (143), some of which had no doubt been purchased from the subscriptions of 2s. per member from a membership of 116. The organisation changed its name in 1850, becoming the Stonehouse Christian Association, but nothing more is known of its fate or that of its library.

It is curious that the positive information on libraries in the group of associations which were established for the working class has in almost every instance been recovered from actual working men's associations, despite the intention to include in this section any libraries surviving from mutual improvement societies and other similar bodies. It is also curious that the only library associated with a religious body seems to be the Stonehouse example, although about half of the organisations identified by Lewis were connected with churches or chapels. The evidence seems too slender to point to any positive conclusion, for there must have been small collections of books in some of these other organisations although no references survive, but there is just a suggestion from the facts which have been recovered that there was possibly a stronger attempt to found libraries in the non-denominational clubs which were particularly aimed at working class men.

6.6 THE PLYMOUTH MUTUAL COOPERATIVE AND INDUSTRIAL SOCIETY

Whilst the mechanics' institutes were failing in their original aims by becoming middle class institutions, and the working men's clubs were failing through impoverishment, another type of library was spreading which was essentially established by the working class for the working class, but under financial arrangements which enabled them to operate with comparative success until eventually overtaken by the rate-supported public libraries. These were the libraries of cooperative trading societies. The history of this type of library has received comparatively little attention in library history studies, although touched upon briefly by Kelly (144) and at greater length by Nicholson (145); in both cases these authors have concentrated upon the early years, and a full study of the libraries has yet to be written. Consequently, the author has had to investigate the general history of cooperative libraries in order to provide a context against which the local developments could be set, and this background is first presented in the next subsection 6.6.1.

6.6.1 The cooperative movement and libraries

The Industrial Revolution had brought about a competitive industrial system and the stabilisation of labour conditions at poverty level, particularly in the textile areas of northern England in the early nineteenth-century. The earliest experiments in cooperation were isolated attempts by groups of workers to solve the problems of subsistence; they included an early experiment with cooperative corn mills at Chatham and Woolwich in 1760, a bakery opened by the Sheerness Economical Society in 1816, the earliest retail store at Fenwick in 1769, and the 1812 pioneer system of dividend purchases at Lennoxtown (146). However, these isolated attempts were not the real roots of the movement which came about to provide an alternative to the competitive industrial system. The necessary social philosophy was lacking until the early nineteenth-century when Robert Owen, inspired by the ideas of the Swiss reformer Fellenberg (147), promoted the idea of "Villages of cooperation", self-supporting communities, in which an emphasis was also laid on education. In the 1820s and 1830s these cooperative principles of political economy were widely promoted, and several cooperative societies were formed, including London (1821), Brighton (1828)

and Birmingham (1828). In 1830 the British Association for Promoting Cooperative Knowledge was established.

The early cooperative movement was not the only working class movement which was interested in providing independent elementary and specialist education for its members, and the underlying motive of independent working class education was particularly captured by Thomas Hodgskin when he wrote in 1823 to urge the establishment of a London Mechanics' Institute:

> "It would be better for men to be deprived of education than to receive their education from their masters; for education in that sense is no better than the training of the cattle that are broken to the yoke .... The workers of London must ... found the new institute at their own expense." (148)

The early cooperators shared this view, and they placed a strong emphasis on education, with meetings for mutual improvement and making plans to assist the education of members' children. One of their most important educational activities was the publication and circulation of periodicals to promote cooperation. At least ten titles began in the 1820s and nearly thirty in the next decade, although many were short-lived (149). Some societies, such as Brighton, Birmingham and Liverpool, established libraries as an important vehicle for education; and the British Association for Promoting Cooperative Knowledge established a library in its London headquarters, from which it sent books to various cooperative societies. In 1832 twenty-three out of the fifty-four societies represented at the Third Cooperative Congress reported that they had a library (150). The largest, belonging to London First Society, had 200 volumes; the smallest "library" reported was four volumes, and several societies merely said that their libraries were "small"; the median size of the libraries for which stock figures were given was 50 - 70 volumes. The second largest collection was 170 volumes, at Birmingham, where the Cooperative Society and Trading Fund Association had a clear acquisitions policy for its library. Not surprisingly, it placed special emphasis on acquiring literature on the cooperative principles of political economy:

> "2. Any works may be received as donations, provided they are not of an immoral tendency, but when purchases are resolved on the following order shall be observed: 1st, works exclusively on the cooperative principles of political economy; 2nd, on domestic economy, agriculture, and gardening, and arts, sciences, and manufactures; 3rd, on moral and social philosophy; 4th, works on political economy generally; 5th, on general literature, including voyages, travels, etc." (151)

The early movement of the 1820s and 1830s collapsed because many men became disenchanted with cooperation as an answer to the problem of improving their condition and turned to more radical measures such as trade unionism, but the work of the early societies and the continuing Owenite movement of the 1830s helped to create conditions in which the modern cooperative store movement of the 1840s onwards could become established.

Although there is no single beginning to the modern "store" movement, the establishment in 1844 of the Rochdale Pioneers' Society for trading purposes is generally acknowledged to mark the first successful foundation of the modern movement. The Rochdale Society's objects were:

> "... to form arrangements for the pecuniary benefit, and improvement of the society and domestic condition of its members, by raising a sufficient amount of capital ... to bring into operation the following plans and arrangements."

These plans and arrangements included the establishment of a store for the sale of provisions and clothing, etc.; the provision of houses; the manufacture of such articles as the Society might determine; and:

> "... as soon as practicable, this society shall proceed to arrange the powers of production, distribution, education, and government, or in other words to establish a self-supporting home colony of united interests, or assist other societies in establishing such colonies." (152)

In simple terms, the Society purchased at wholesale prices and sold at prevailing prices, distributing the resulting profit to its members in proportion to their purchases (i.e. dividends). Members purchased a share, and formed a democratic self-governing body, holding regular and frequent business meetings at which each member had a vote. This Rochdale Society was successful, and it was used as a model by many new societies which often also copied the Rochdale model for educational work. Rochdale was the first store society to set up a special committee for the direction of cooperative education (153), and they set a priority on a library and newsroom; these were founded in 1849, and were at first financed by voluntary subscriptions of 2d. per week from members and by a series of special grants made by the Society to its Library Committee. In 1853 an important change was made to the arrangements; the Society allocated 2½% of the trading surplus annually for educational purposes, and much of this income was spent on the library and reading room which formed the main educational activity for a few years.

The spread of cooperative societies led to the foundation of the Cooperative Union in 1869, which encouraged the formation of libraries and reading rooms as part of the educational work of the movement. By 1895, nearly one third of the 400 societies were maintaining libraries, at a total cost of about 15% of the total Education Fund, and about 30% of the total Education Fund was being spent on the 376 reading rooms which were being maintained by 95 societies (154).

The establishment of cooperative libraries was contemporary with the early public library movement, but was not deliberately competitive, being intended to fill gaps in provision rather than to duplicate existing facilities. Some societies made grants from their Education Fund to the public libraries in their area, and in 1897 a recommendation was made by the Cooperative Congress that expenditure on libraries and newsrooms should be limited where public authorities were taking action in such matters (155). Many cooperative libraries were donated or sold to public library authorities (156), as at Brighton (157) and Halifax (158) respectively. The number of libraries and newsrooms began to decline, but there were still 119 libraries and 366 newsrooms in 1907. Many libraries were dispersed altogether, or were shared out among branch libraries in outlying areas not yet served by public libraries (159), although a few, like Plymouth and Bury (160) continued to operate for many more years. While the local libraries were disappearing, the Cooperative reference libraries were being set up. In 1914 the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust gave a grant towards the establishment of the Cooperative Reference Library at Plunkett House, Dublin; and there was also a considerable library at the Cooperative Union headquarters in Manchester (161).

The precise ranking and importance of the library of the Plymouth Society cannot be finally determined until the histories of the individual societies and their libraries are better known than at present. It seems, however, that the Library of the Plymouth Society had one of the longest histories among libraries of its type, spanning 1860 - 1941. In 1874 the Plymouth Society was in the lowest half of tables ranking societies in terms of membership and capital (162), but by 1910 it had the third largest membership and fifth largest trade in the United Kingdom; with this large membership and resources it might

be reasonable to anticipate that the Society's Library would also be among the most important of its kind in the United Kingdom. Certainly it was among the largest. In 1895, when the average bookstock was about 2,660 volumes for cooperative libraries, Plymouth had nearly double the figure, 4,860 volumes; the average expenditure on libraries was £40 per annum, but Plymouth in 1893 spent £170. In the same year, 95 societies maintained 376 reading rooms (average four) for about an average of £120 per society; Plymouth maintained nine reading rooms in 1893 for about £242, double the average expenditure per society but marginally less than the average expenditure per reading room (163). These statistics indicate that the Plymouth Society's Library and associated newsrooms were of significance amongst others of their kind.

The following account is the first study of the Plymouth Society's Library, although there are passing references to its existence in the histories of the Society. The Library's own records were destroyed, with the books, during the Blitz of 1941, and the account of its history has been reconstructed mainly from the Society's *Quarterly accounts* and incomplete files of its publication, and *Monthly Record*, through the courtesy of the Plymouth and South Devon Cooperative Society.

6.6.2 The origin of the Plymouth Mutual Cooperative and Industrial Society, its Library and Reading Rooms.

The 1844 Rochdale pioneer experiment in cooperation was described in G.J. Holyoake's *History of the Rochdale Pioneers*, a work which provided an inspiration to many societies, including the Plymouth Society which was founded in 1860, by far the earliest of the Devon and Cornwall societies and a leader in the Southwest. The decision to found the Society was made on 27 December 1859 at a meeting in a shoe-maker's shop in Tin Street. The shoemaker was Charles Goodanew, a Tavistock man who had lived in Plymouth for twenty years. In 1836 he had joined the Chartists; he had heard Mr. Holyoake lecture, and he was convinced of the need for a change in the condition of the working classes. On Christmass Day 1859 he discussed the prospects of the working man with a couple of like-minded friends, and they read Holyoake's

book together. Two days later the matter was discussed by a larger group of ten founder members, consisting of six shoemakers, two carpenters, a painter and a mason; they were joined by eight more people at a meeting on 3 January 1860, when each subscribed 1/- plus 3d weekly, to form the Plymouth Mutual Co-operative and Industrial Society Ltd. Others joined, and within a few weeks the capital had grown to £5, which was spent on renting an upstairs room in a house in Catte St. at 1s. 10d. per week, and buying 50s. worth of commodities. They began trading - with borrowed scales! Before the end of the first quarter the Society was able to extend its accommodation by leasing the ground floor. After seven weeks' trading, the first quarter's account and report showed 72 members, and a profit resulting in a dividend of 1s. 2d. in the £.

This was very gratifying to the pioneers; but the profit from trading was not their only concern. They were strongly supportive of the educational function of co-operative societies, and set aside 3s. of the first profits for educational purposes. The first educational activity was the setting up of a library and reading room in the upstairs room which was also used as a meeting room. One of the original rules drawn up by the Society was that 2½% of net profit should be set aside for educational purposes; this followed the Rochdale model. Unfortunately its implementation was delayed because of a legal problem, but by 1864 the rule had been reinstated in the *Rules* and was in operation. Meanwhile the Society was so successful that in its third quarter it took a larger house and shop in Kinterbury Street, and it ended the first year's trading with 90 members and a profit of £54. A teaparty was held to celebrate, at which nearly £6 profit was made; this money was devoted to the purchase of books, benches, and a table for the library and reading room, which had been transferred to the room above the shop in Kinterbury Street. Thomas Reynolds, one of the ten pioneers, remembered :

> " ... that Thomas Reynolds, Joshua Gliddon, and Edward Travers were appointed to visit a second-hand book store, kept by a Mrs. Forward, in Ebrington Street, and to select and purchase books which they considered suitable for the reading and enlightenment of the members. This was accomplished; and those volumes, supplemented by books presented by the members, or lent out of their personal

> property, formed the nucleus of the present library. Mr. Josh Gliddon was elected librarian and that duty he carefully carried out. From the very start we took care to have a reading room; and meetings for discussion and debates quickly followed." (164)

The 7th quarterly report in September 1861 announced that "A room for instruction and amusement, free to all members, is about to be opened every evening during the week, from 7 to 10." The 8th quarterly report in December 1861 elaborated that the room was "provided with books and papers, for the accommodation of members and their friends." At this stage, it appears that the vestigial library was for reference only. By March 1862 the opening hours had been reduced to 8-10 p.m., but chess and draughts had been added to the attractions. In 1864 the Society moved to 3 Cornwall Street. The Library opening hours were unchanged, but the service was soon to be extended for the 21st quarterly report in March 1865 stated that "a person attends Saturday evenings, from 9 to 10 p.m. to change the books lent from the library." In the next report, the "person" was referred to for the first time as "the librarian". By December 1868 the lending service was extended to 8-10 p.m. on Saturdays.

The Education Fund of 2½% of the net profits slowly rose from £2. 15s. 9d. in 1863, to £9. 9s. Od. in 1869, and the Library and Newsroom benefitted accordingly. In 1870 the sum of £13. 1s. 8d. was spent on the Library and Newsroom, of which over £8 was spent on books, £3 on periodicals, and £2. 14s. Od. on binding.

The same accounts also show that from September 1869 the Librarian received a quarterly payment of 6s. 6d. The Librarian was also the Secretary of the Education Department, for his name is recorded on the September 1869 accounts as "H.J. Barter, Secretary and Librarian." In 1869 and 1870 1s. 6d. and 1s. 2d. respectively were paid for "catalogues for the Library", and 6s. 2d. in 1870 for unspecified alterations of the Library.

By March 1871 Samuel Lawrence had taken over as Secretary from Mr. Barter and was presumably also Librarian, for in 1872 he used the title Librarian instead of Secretary at the end of the Education Department report. The demand for home reading must have grown, for by June 1871 the Librarian attended Thursday evenings 8-10 as well as Saturdays to exchange books and his quarterly "pay" was raised to 10s. The growing collection reached over 600 volumes by June 1872, and the Reading Room was supplied with London and local daily and weekly newspapers. In June 1873 Frederick Dyer was Librarian, and held the office for the next three years, during which the Catalogue was revised and printed, newspaper racks were purchased, a new clock was installed and minor repairs carried out to the Library. The Librarian's salary was increased from 10s. to 15s. per quarter in March 1873, then to £1 in March 1874, presumably because of his industry on the increasing number of new books (the book fund was £25 plus £5 binding). Extra help was needed, and 10s. was paid to someone in March 1876 for assistance to the Librarian. By 1876, therefore, the Library and Newsroom had been established and were poised on the verge of considerable expansion which was made possible - and necessary - by the development of the Society itself.

6.6.3 The growth of the Society 1860 - 1914, and the place of the Library within it.

The success of the Society is indicated by the growth of membership and net profit shown by the following statistics, which also indicate the amount allocated to the Education Fund.

Year	Members	%of Three Towns population	Net profit £	Education Fund £
1860	90	.01	54	-
1870	270	.4	148	3
1880	5,154	3.7	12,851	304
1890	13,972	9.0	33,218	691
1900	25,653	13.8	76,611	1,522
1910	38,035	18.2	121,554	est. 3,038
1914	42,125	>20	148,542	est. 3,712

Starting as a grocery service in 1860, the Society rapidly extended its range of services by 1900 to the following : 1865 fuel, 1867 butchery, 1868 bakery, 1870 footwear and drapery, 1877 tailoring, 1880 mortgage business, 1883 dairy, 1888 farm produce, 1894 furnishing, 1898 building. Most retail departments eventually had branches, but it was usually the grocery service which first spread into a new district. The first branches were opened in Plymouth, but almost from the beginning dockyard men and government employees had taken a deep interest in the Society, and in 1877 premises were acquired in Ross St., Morice Town, for a grocery branch, followed by another in Duke St., Devonport, 1879; as early as 1875 a grocery shop opened in Adelaide St., Stonehouse. Branches of the various services spread a network throughout the Three Towns, and even across the Tamar to Torpoint in 1885. In 1899 there were : 26 groceries; 22 butcheries; 9 dairies; 7 boot shops; 6 drapery and furnishings; and various factories and warehouses. By 1910 there were more than 1,200 employees, and over 38,000 members, the latter forming over 18% of the Three Towns population. This, then was the Library's community; its policy and administration were the responsibility of the Society's Education Department, which was established early in the Society's history.

It has already been shown that in 1864 a rule directed that 2½% of the net profit should be allocated for educational work; at first this work seems to have consisted of the Library and Reading Room under the control of the General Committee of Management. Soon, this control was delegated, and the Rules of 1872 cast some light on the organisation of the Education Department. The Education Fund was under the management of a special committee (consisting of five members, a librarian and a treasurer) which was responsible to the quarterly meetings of the Society for the proper disposal of the fund. Three of the five members together with the Librarian and Treasurer were elected in April, and the remaining two members in October. General meetings of the Education Department were held each quarter to receive the report of the Committee and to transact business. The authority of the Education Committee was considerable but it was not allowed to take any new premises without the special sanction of the Society. In practice it appears that from 1869 the offices of secretary and librarian were held by one person, but it appears officially in the 1880 Rules, where it was specified: "the librarian to act as secretary, and on all occasions the librarian

and treasurer to act under the directions of the above committee." (Twigg shows in Appendix 7 of his *Outline history of co-operative education* that the first appointment of a "fulltime education secretary" at Plymouth was in 1879, the earliest in the South West Section. His definition of the term "fulltime education secretary" included librarians performing part or all of secretarial duties (163)). It was also ruled that : "In case the reading rooms or library be on the Society's premises, rent or gas shall not be charged for the same." The Library always remained a single, central department in Plymouth; but a number of branch reading rooms were founded throughout the Three Towns, often attached to retail outlets which, in accordance with the rule, bore the cost of the accommodation.

The relative importance of the Library as an educational activity changed considerably throughout its history. In the first two decades the Library and Reading Room were the main educational functions, taking up a high percentage of the available funds. From 1877 to 1890 the main network of branch newsrooms was established, reducing the percentage expenditure on the Library itself but at least making reading materials more widely available in the form of newspapers and magazines. The emphasis then began to move towards other activities. In 1883 classes were held in French and Shorthand, and in 1888 the Co-operative Union's first examinations in Adult Co-operation were held, for which the Society provided classes, together with useful subjects such as book-keeping, dressmaking, and recreational classes in music and the support of an "orchestral band". In 1889 the monthly *Plymouth Record* began publication. In 1895 the Co-operative Choir was formed. Ambulance classes began in 1896. Lectures and outings were arranged. These, and other activities, were under the auspices of the Education Department, and although the annual income increased from the Society's net profits, it had to be spread more thinly, as the following approximate breakdowns will show. In 1870 the whole of the education fund expenditure was on the Library (74%) and Newsroom (26%); by 1880 this had declined to 45% and 24% respectively, 1890 22% and 25%, and by 1910 was 16% and 8%; (the figures for 1910 are artificially low because they exclude a proportion of the central building costs for maintenance etc.).

Although, unlike many societies, "the maintenance of an adequate library" continued to be a specific objective in the Rules

until 1945, it took third place after "The maintenance of an efficient Education Staff" and "The production of the Society's *Record*". Nevertheless, bearing in mind the growth of the free public libraries locally, and the general policy of the Co-operative Union not to compete with services better provided by other agencies, such as local government, it is a matter of some interest that the Library continued to exist at all as an officially recognised and comparatively expensive function until it was burned by bombing in 1941. How did it achieve this entrenched position? And why did the newsrooms fail?

6.6.4 The development of the Library 1876-1914

In 1877 the grocery business moved out of the house in Kinterbury St. to other accommodation, allowing the Education Department to occupy the whole of the upper floor and apparently to separate the Library and Reading Room. The Library was rearranged, and the Librarian's new hours for issuing books to the 445 borrowers were :

Wednesday	Oct. 1 - Mar. 21	7 - 9
	Apr. 1 - Sept. 30	8 - 10
Saturday		7 - 9

Issues for the half year June 1876 - March 1877 were 7,310, which suggests heavy usage of the small stock of a few hundred volumes. Certainly it was popular enough to justify extending its stock and services, and the Library was now on the verge of rapid expansion, made possible by the greatly increased allocations which were being made to the Education Fund as the Society's net profit increased. In 1870 the income from this source was £16, 1875 £75, 1880 £304, after which it remained about £400 for several years. The Library and Reading Room was still the main function of the Education Department, and the extra funding made expansion possible. While the expansion of the news rooms now began, as described below, the expenditure on new books for the Library soared from about £8 in 1870 to £25 in 1875, £40 in 1878, and £72 in 1879, with increases also in expenditure on binding. Mr. Frost, the Librarian appointed in 1876, had to cope with this, and in 1878 an Assistant Librarian, P. Flynn, was appointed; he was paid £1 per quarter, the same as the Librarian! Then Mr. Frost was elected onto the General Committee of Management, and Mr. Flynn was elected Librarian; Mr. E.C. Burton became Assistant Librarian in 1879 and was soon to become Librarian.

Thus the infusion of new blood coincided with the expansion of resources, and

> "the significant and half-starved Library underwent a transformation. The books were classified, an indicator introduced, large numbers of books were added, and a catalogue prepared ...; borrowers increased rapidly, and a third evening for issue was necessary." (164)

Fulltime opening had become necessary, and in 1879 the Education Committee recommended the appointment of a "permanent librarian" to devote the whole of his time to the work; furthermore, they recommended that Mr. Burton, Assistant Librarian, should be offered the post. The Quarterly Meeting of the Society agreed that there should be a "permanent librarian", but were unable to appoint Mr. Burton as this would have been contrary to the new Rules which had just been adopted and were due to come into operation in 1880. In these Rules, the Librarian was an officer, and as such had to be elected annually at the April meeting of the Society. Consequently, an election was held for the post of Librarian in mid or late 1879 to make the first appointment for the remainder of the Society's year. Two candidates were nominated; Mr. Charles Goodanew, one of the original Plymouth pioneers, and E.C. Burton. Mr. Goodanew won by a narrow margin but enjoyed office only for a few months, for when the 1880 Rules came into operation he was disqualified from standing because he was a shop-keeper, and "No member having an interest in a similar Trading Society, or being a shop-keeper, shall be eligible for any office in this Society" (165). Three candidates were nominated; Mr. Burton was elected and it says much for him that he was from that time re-elected Librarian annually unopposed until his retirement in 1916.

The Library was soundly established as the result of extra accommodation, greatly increased finance and an enthusiastic full time librarian. This change was reflected in the response by users. Library membership soared from under 500 in 1877 to nearly 1400 in 1883, and issues rose in the same period from about 10,500 to over 21,000 p.a. There must have been a very rapid increase in stock in the next couple of years, for in 1885 when the Library was visited during the Library Association's Annual Conference in Plymouth, it was described as comprising about 3,500 volumes (166). Growth thereafter must have been slow, for the stock had reached only 4,680 volumes by 1894, but it was obviously in very great demand. As the stock grew, so did the issues, and an approximate ratio of 10 issues : 1 volume was maintained

up to 1912/13, in which year over 116,000 issues were recorded on about 12,000 volumes. The stock was closed access, and an indicator system was in use. An "alphabetical" printed catalogue was compiled in 1884 by Mr. Burton and sold at 3d. per copy, and a classified list of the books was shown on the Indicator (167). In 1895 the complete Catalogue was printed in sections in centre supplements of the *Record* so that members could collect a copy free of charge. The arrangement of this Catalogue was "classified order", and the classification consisted of broad subject classes, within which the arrangement was alphabetical by author. These classes are shown in Table 22.

In 1894 the Society's new Central Block in Frankfort St. was opened, but lacked sufficient space for the Library and Newsroom, which were installed in nearly 15/16 Frankfort St. Here, the Library was installed on the first floor, where the front room was the book store and the back room contained the indicator, which was now lengthened considerably; a service opening was constructed between the rooms. The newsroom was on the adjacent first floor of number 16, with a swing door from number 15 (which provided the only entrance). The ground floor was probably used for shop or storage. Above the Library in number 15 was a room for band practice(!) and meetings; above the Newsroom, accommodation for the dressmaking service and recreation. The new Library arrangements were approved by members, for it was reported that hundreds of new borrowers became members and issues topped 46,000 that year.

Occasional statistics over the next few years provide some information on the relative importance of different subjects, in relation to the total stock, and in relation to the total issue. These have been converted into percentages and are shown in Table 22, where it will be seen that fiction and juvenile books account for 86% issues in 1894/5 and 93% in 1912/3. The stock of Class E, on education, law and political economy, which are relevant to the co-operative movement, is low in popularity - less than 1% of issues, although 4% of the stock! The heavy borrowing of fiction seems to indicate a similar pattern to contemporary public library issue statistics, but no records have survived to indicate the extent to which their memberships coincided. Many people probably borrowed from both libraries, but it seems that the P.M.C.I.S. Library was particularly useful to members who were not

Class	1894/5		1901/2		1912/3	
	Vols. %	Issues %	Vols. %	Issues %	Vols. %	Issues %
A. Theology and philosophy	2.2	0.4	1.6	0.4	1.2	0.1
B. Biography and correspondence	5.0	0.8	3.8	0.5	2.8	0.3
C. Arts, science and natural history	6.0	2.0	4.7	1.8	4.1	1.0
D. History, voyages and travels	10.2	3.4	7.9	2.0	6.3	1.2
E. Education, law and political economy	4.3	0.9	4.5	0.7	4.0	0.4
F. Novels, tales etc.	45.7	73.6	54.4	78.2	58.4	79.2
G. Poetry and drama	1.9	0.5	1.2	0.2	0.9	0.2
H. Juvenile	11.1	12.4	9.8	11.6	10.3	14.1
I. Miscellaneous	3.0	2.6	2.2	0.2	1.8	0.1
J. Magazines and periodicals	10.6	3.4	8.6	3.0	7.5	2.4
K. (added 1897) Music			1.3	1.4	1.5	0.8
L. (added 1907) Painting studies					1.2	0.2
Total %	100	100	100	100	100	100
Actual Total	4,861	46,826	8,383	67,499	12,028	116,172

ratepayers and who preferred not to obtain the ratepayer's guarantee which was necessary before joining the public libraries. It is interesting to note that in 1894 it was reported that many of the new borrowers included those "who cannot be exactly described as working class members".

By 1897 an extension was required for the Central Building, and the Library was moved temporarily from its adjacent site to Radford Place to the north east of the town centre. The issue immediately dropped by several thousand, which was explained by the "isolated position" of these temporary premises; most of the readers were coming from the "east part" of Plymouth, Devonport members were handicapped by the longer distance, and the number of borrowers was small compared to the previous three years next to the Central Building. It seems likely that the problem of distance for Devonport members was only accentuated, not created, by the temporary Library location; for when a close look was taken of the newsrooms in 1898 the suggestion was put forward that it might be better for the money used for their upkeep to be applied to establishing branch libraries, obviously with a Devonport branch in mind, although nothing was done immediately.

The Central Extension was opened on Sept. 27, 1899, and the "Cooperative Society's Institute" (viz. the Education Department) on the second and third floor was officially opened by the Chairman of the Education Committee despite the unfortunate fact that there had not been sufficient time to fit up the Library and Reading Room! The latter were officially opened on Friday 1st December, and were soon in full swing. The Library and Newsroom were located on the second floor, above the shops, together with a lecture theatre capable of seating 300 people; on the third floor were the Institute's classroom, Secretary's office and committee room, plus millinery and dressmaking services; the fourth floor was a stockroom. The Library therefore benefitted more than ever before by people being attracted into the building both for shopping and considerable educational and recreational functions. A number of changes were included in the new Library accommodation. The indicator had been abolished because it was never very popular and half of the borrowers left it to staff to hand out a "reasonable book". A barrier was placed around three sides of the Library now so that although closed access still operated members could for the first time walk around and see the books. Lists of books were placed on a long desk for consultation,

arranged as on the former indicator, and a new catalogue was quickly published for use at home. Issues immediately recovered their former level and surpassed them to achieve over 60,000 for the year 1900/01. In the same year nearly £300 was spent on books, binding and periodicals, the highest expenditure of any local library except the rate-supported public libraries. In September 1900 the Education Committee reported gleefully that the Borough Librarian had reported a falling off of issues because of the war - but there was no falling off of the Cooperation Library, rather, an increase! They wondered whether the falling off of the Borough Library was due to the opening of the Cooperative Library?

It seems that members of the Society held divided opinions about the Library. In a discussion about the adequacy of its stock, in 1898, it was pointed out that if every member wished to borrow there would not be enough books for them. Opponents to Library expansion pointed out that there was no need for the Library because there were free libraries in Plymouth and Devonport. This was countered by the argument that non-ratepayers were handicapped by having to get a ratepayer's guarantee. Although many co-operative libraries elsewhere were being closed because of the availability of public libraries, there does not seem to have been any serious attempt to disband this one. It was evidently satisfying many members and was apparently the most popular of the Society's educational activities. Indeed, at the above debate in 1898 the Committee gave its assurance that it would increase the Library stock as much as possible because of its popularity with members. It repeated this assurance in 1900, and explained that the reason why the stock figures were not showing much increase was because of the rate of replacements required through wear and tear. (The only indicative quantification found was in 1895, when the annual stockcheck showed that between 300 and 400 books - i.e. about 7-9% - were unfit for further use). Nevertheless, the total stock crept up from 5,851 volumes in 1899 to 7,880 in 1902, and reached over 12,000 in 1912, after which it seems to have stabilised around that figure.

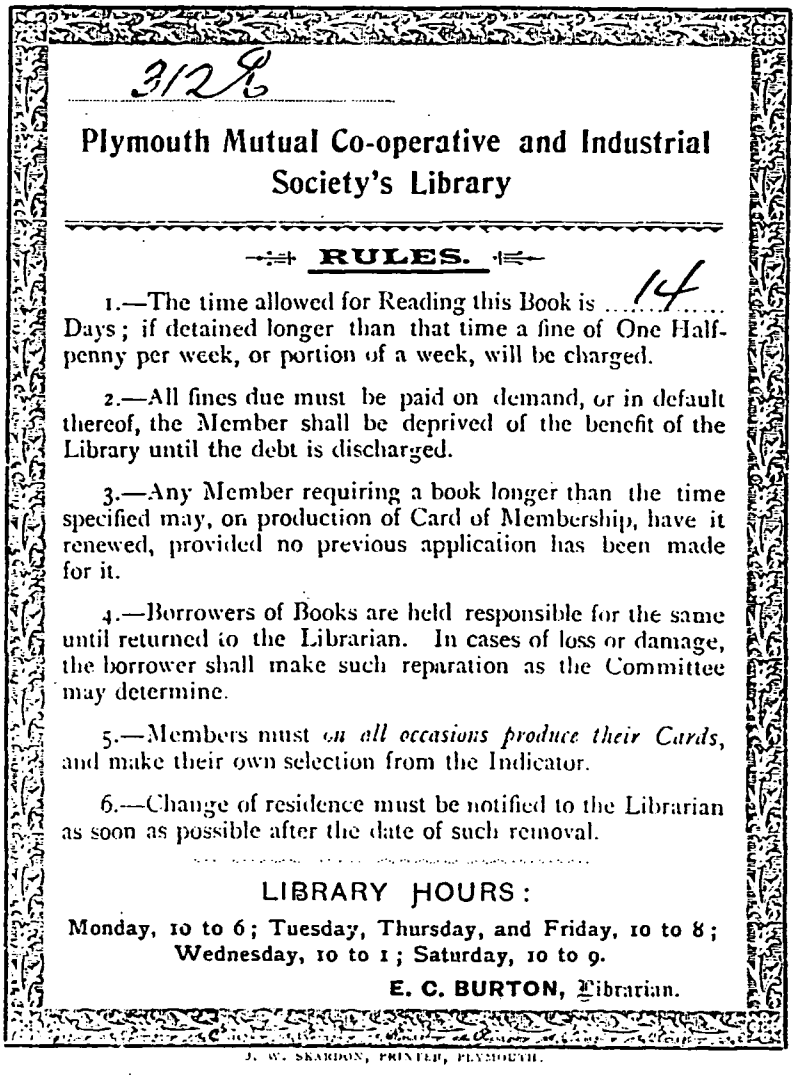
Even this modest stock expansion made it necessary for the fourth side of the Library to be shelved in 1901, when it was calculated that, at the existing rate, in two years' time the Library would have to

expand into the Lecture Room or a branch library would have to be opened at Devonport. It is not clear whether the raising of the borrowing limit to two books from 17 February 1902, was due to a sense of service or a means of easing the accommodation problem! The problem of fair circulation of popular stock was safeguarded by limiting members to borrowing one book for study from Class, A, B, C, D, E or K, in addition to one fiction book, borrowed on the same card. A "floral study" (for copying by painting on screens, vases, etc.) could be borrowed in addition to a book; these floral studies, first introduced in 1901, formally became Class L in 1907. A copy of the Rules of this period appears in one of the surviving books and is shown in Fig. 28.

The expansion of stock and services must have placed a strain on the small Library staff. When the Library had first opened all day on week-days (from 10 a.m., no closing time specified) in 1879/80 the Librarian was apparently the only member of staff. From 1884 the accounts show 10/- per quarter for an Assistant, which points to a very small amount of help (the Librarian's salary was £16. 18s. Od. per quarter). In 1889 the Assistant's salary jumpedto £2. 8s. 4d. and £3. 13s. 6d., which suggests a considerable increase in hours. The joint salaries of Librarian and Assistant rose gradually, but no posts were added to the Library, although there was an attendant or caretaker in the Education Department who probably took care of the Reading Room. This staff of two were apparently manning the following opening hours in 1902 :

Monday	10 - 6
Tues, Thurs, Fri.	10 - 8
Wednesday	10 - 1
Saturday	10 - 9

They acquired, processed and issued the stock, and maintained the catalogue. During an annual summer closure of three weeks, normally in August, they conducted a stockcheck and had to find time for their holidays. Moreover, it must be remembered that the Librarian was Secretary of the Education Department and had many non-library duties. He accepted enquiries and applications for courses, edited the *Record*, and must have been deeply involved in the administration of other activities. No wonder that the volume of work generated by over 5,000 borrowers and a growing stock were outstripping the staff's ability to



3128

Plymouth Mutual Co-operative and Industrial Society's Library

RULES.

1.—The time allowed for Reading this Book is 14 Days; if detained longer than that time a fine of One Half-penny per week, or portion of a week, will be charged.

2.—All fines due must be paid on demand, or in default thereof, the Member shall be deprived of the benefit of the Library until the debt is discharged.

3.—Any Member requiring a book longer than the time specified may, on production of Card of Membership, have it renewed, provided no previous application has been made for it.

4.—Borrowers of Books are held responsible for the same until returned to the Librarian. In cases of loss or damage, the borrower shall make such reparation as the Committee may determine.

5.—Members must *on all occasions produce their Cards*, and make their own selection from the Indicator.

6.—Change of residence must be notified to the Librarian as soon as possible after the date of such removal.

LIBRARY HOURS:

Monday, 10 to 6; Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday, 10 to 8; Wednesday, 10 to 1; Saturday, 10 to 9.

E. C. BURTON, Librarian.

J. W. SKARDON, PRINTER, PLYMOUTH.

Fig. 28 Plymouth Mutual Cooperative and Industrial Society. Library rules, c. 1900.

cope. Accommodation too remained a problem. In 1906 it was pointed out that the stock had outgrown the accommodation, and there would be no shelf room for thousands of books if they were called in for the annual stock check. In any case, the staff could not cope with the volume of work in the three weeks allowed. It was arranged instead that the Library would remain open during August, and the Librarian would stop the issue of books one section at a time for stockchecking.

From this time onwards the regular publication of library statistics seems to have succumbed in the staff's struggle to keep up with the work. A new catalogue was published in 1907, and was the only means by which members could find out the Library's holdings in Classes A, G, I and reference works, all of which were now hidden from view because of lack of shelf room. There were two possible solutions to the problem of space - establish a branch library, or find extra accommodation for the Library. A proposal for a branch library at Devonport had been made in 1901, but had apparently not met with success, although in the 166th quarterly report in June 1901 the Education Department account shows £25 as a balance reserved for the branch library at Devonport. In each of the following two quarters an additional £75 was further reserved, but the purpose had been changed to a "Library extension". The Librarian's ambition to take over the lecture hall was denied, and the space solution proposed in 1907 was that separate buildings should be found for the Educational Department. Neither the records nor local directories reveal the details of what did happen; perhaps some adjustments or extra shelving gave more space, for the Library remained at the same address and in 1909 managed somehow to cope with calling in its stock of about 12,000 for a stock check. Several hundred volumes of juvenile books and fiction were then found unfit for further use, which is not surprising in view of the estimated readership of 5,000 - 6,000 members and an average weekly issue of over 2,150 which probably continued to concentrate on these two classes of books. The turnover of books must have made it difficult to keep the Catalogue up to date. In 1913 a new Catalogue was being compiled, which necessitated another stock check; this time, apparently there was no shelf room for more than half the books, so the problem must have been considerable! Indeed, the impression from the scanty records is that the full effort of the library staff was spent on trying to keep up with the routine administration of an ever growing stock and issues, with no

time to assess the service or to implement such changes as might have been thought desirable.

Neither the early war years 1914-1915 nor the amalgamation of the Three Towns in 1914 had any noticeable effect on the Library, although the Society changed its name to Plymouth Co-operative Society. The pressures were maintained, but by 1916 it had become obvious that it was necessary to overhaul the stock thoroughly and to reorganise the Library. The burden on E.C. Burton, Secretary and Librarian, was lightened in early 1916 by the appointment of a new editor of the *Record*, and the intention to reorganise the Library and "to greatly improve the class of books contained therein" was announced in the March issue of the *Record*. Unfortunately, Mr. Burton's wife died at this time, and the May issue of the *Record* carried the news that Mr. Burton had announced that he wished to retire, and would not stand for re-election as he felt that the greatly extended programme of educational work made it necessary for a younger man to be appointed. He was presented with a gift of £100 in appreciation of his services over 36 years, and his retirement marked the end of a lengthy period of Library development and the beginning of a new phase.

6.6.5 The newsrooms 1876-1914

In the early years of the Society one room appears to have served as newsroom, library, meeting room and recreation room; but in 1877 the Education Department took over the whole of the first floor of the building and it appears that the newsroom and library were now separated although adjacent. The newsroom was referred to as the "reading room" in the Society's reports, but from the context it seems clear that the term refers to the newspaper and magazine facility and not the consultation space for library books. The branch "reading rooms" were definitely newspaper and magazine rooms. In order to avoid confusion, the word newsroom will therefore be used in this account. Although the responsibility of the Librarian towards the newsrooms is not clear, some consideration of the newsrooms seems justified because they provided a service similar to those of the public libraries, with which some comparison will be made later.

The 1880 Rules specified that the Librarian was to act as

Secretary to the Education Committee, and the Library was now seen as a distinct organisation from the newsroom. It is not clear whether the Librarian was involved in the expansion of the newsrooms in his capacity as Librarian or as Secretary of the Education Department. In any case, he must have been involved in the establishment of a series of branch newsrooms as the first major expansion of the Department's work made possible by rapidly increasing finance from the Society's profits. The Ross St. (Morice Town) newsroom had been opened in 1877, to be followed by Duke St. (Devonport) 1880, Ford 1884, Holburn St. (Plymouth) 1884, Chapel St. (Stonehouse) 1885, Mount St. (Plymouth) and Hotham Place (Stoke) by 1890, Torpoint 1892 and St. Budeaux 1896. The newsroom at Morice Town was moved from Ross St. to Alcester St. in 1891, and from Alcester St. to Pym St. the following year. These newsrooms had been seen as part of the educational function of the Society, making information available to members throughout the Three Towns who could not afford to buy newspapers and magazines for themselves. Towards the end of the century, however, the policy had to be reviewed for circumstances were changing. In 1895 it was first proposed, unsuccessfully, to close the Duke St. newsroom, because it was so little used and was close to the Borough Newsroom. In 1898 the Committee drew attention to Chapel St. and St. Budeaux newsrooms which were very little used, and Duke St. which was no better used than before. These three cost nearly £60 per annum plus the rent and gas costs borne by the Trading Department. All newsrooms had been open 8 a.m. - 10 p.m., but now the Education Committee decided to close Chapel St. and Duke St. at 9 p.m. because the gas was absolutely wasted after that hour. The Committee commented that the availability of halfpenny papers and cheap magazines meant that there was no longer the demand for small newsrooms in out of the way districts; and it wondered whether members might be better satisfied if the money were to be spent on branch libraries? It was decided that they would not give up the newsrooms but that there should be economies - short of closing up!

In 1899 the Society's Committee of Management intervened and the St. Budeaux newsroom was given up to it for residential purposes. At the same time a sidelight was thrown on the operation of the newsrooms:

> "A similar state of things continues at Duke St. Devonport. Since the death of the head salesman we have had a person in charge of the room after the closing of the store, and he reports spending the greater part of the evenings

> alone. The remainder of the newsrooms are fairly well patronised, with one exception, Chapel St" (168).

In the same year Duke St. newsroom was closed by order of the General Committee of Management, who requested the room, and Chapel St. by order of the Education Committee because of lack of use. In 1902 the Central and remaining four branch newsrooms were advertised as being open 9 a.m. - 10 p.m., and well supplied with London and local papers, magazines, weekly papers, *Army* and *Navy Lists* etc. Their surplus used stock was sold by application to the Librarian, providing an insignificant income of a few shillings. A new newsroom was opened at Mutley Plain in 1902 but an attempt to open one in the Salisbury Road area failed because of inability to find a rentable room in a private house there. The Central and five branch newsrooms continued unchanged for a few years. In 1904 it was reported that they were much better patronised. In 1909 the popularity of the newsroom at Hotham Place (Stoke) was remarked upon, for there was a Free Library newsroom close by; but despite the popularity, in 1911 it was closed because it was "rendered unnecessary" by the municipal newsroom provided in Wilton St. It was intended to close Ford newsroom also because of the proximity of a municipal newsroom, but it was found that the latter had moved to Station Rd. and the distance was such as to justify retaining the Society's branch. In the discussion, it was pointed out that readers had to *stand* in the municipal newsrooms, which was uncomfortable, particularly for elderly people; they could sit in comfort in the Society's newsroom!

In fact, the branch newsrooms were close to the end of their justifiable existence, and they had all been closed by the end of the next decade.

CHAPTER SEVEN. RATE-SUPPORTED PUBLIC LIBRARIES

The first precise proposal for the establishment of rate-supported public libraries has recently been shown by Kelly (1) to have been made in 1831, nearly twenty years before the landmark of the first *Public Libraries Act*, 1850. The movement was therefore growing at a time when there was already a rich variety of libraries in existence, catering for the middle class and working class readers. Why was it necessary to introduce yet another type of library? The deficiencies of the existing provision was made clear in the main *Report of the Select Committee on Public Libraries, 1849* (2), in which the evidence of many witnesses identified the problems; for example, the mechanics' institutes which had been established for the working classes had been largely taken over by the middle classes and their libraries were usually stocked with inappropriate or out of date literature; commercial subscription libraries had a high fiction content; private subscription libraries were the province of exclusive groups of wealthy and educated middle class people; Sunday schools had libraries which were heavily biased towards religious literature, and so on. There were no large collections of books available in Great Britain to all the people, free of charge, and free from social, political or religious prejudice. The rate-supported public library, often wrongly called the *free* public library, came to fill the gap.

It is not intended in these pages to detail the history of public libraries; which can be found in a number of standard works, of which the most detailed and most recent is Kelly's *History of public libraries in Great Britain 1845-1975* (3). Instead, a few points will be selected which are of particular relevance to the establishment of public libraries in the Three Towns in particular and Devon and Cornwall in general, as context for the sections on the two local libraries which follow this introduction.

In the years leading up to the 1850 *Public Libraries Act* the public library movement does not seem to have received any tangible support from the Southwest, although one of the prominent promoters was a Cornishman by birth. The pioneers were Warrington and Salford in the northeast and Canterbury in the south-east, each of which used the 1845 *Museums Act* to provide rate support for library purposes.

The *Museums Act* 1845 provided a pattern for the first *Public Library Act* 1850. The latter was a permissive Act, and its adoption was restricted to municipal boroughs of over 10,000 population; the adoption required a two-thirds majority poll of the burgesses. The Council then had the power to levy a rate not exceeding ½d. in the £ for buildings and staff, but not for books, as the Select Committee had made the mistake of believing that "donations will abundantly supply the books" (4); this resulted, as in the case of mechanics' institutes and other philanthropic libraries, in ill balanced and poorly stocked collections and had to be remedied by the 1855 Act which raised the rate limit to 1d. in £ and gave power to purchase books, newspapers, etc. from the rate income. Plymouth and Devonport both possessed the minimum population specified in the 1850 Act, but Stonehouse did not become eligible to adopt the Acts until the limit was modified in 1855. The 1850 Act also included the provision of museums, and the 1855 Act added Schools for Art and Science, all to be maintained out of the same rate, so that in many library districts the public library was not the sole recipient of the income levied from the rates. Plymouth was not handicapped in that way, but Devonport did provide a museum as well as a library service. It was not until the *Technical Instruction Act* 1889 and the *Museums and Gymnasiums Act* 1891 that the public library penny rate began to be freed from these competing claims.

The establishment of public libraries took place very slowly at first, for a number of reasons. The Acts were permissive and therefore a substantial amount of support was required in a potential library district before the mechanism of adoption could be invoked successfully; but many burgesses were not persuaded to place an extra burden on the rates for financial and philosophical reasons. There was opposition from class prejudice because of the over-emphasis on the benefits of public libraries to the "working classes" in early debates, and many people preferred to pay a subscription as a matter of class status. The purpose of the public library was often not clearly understood. Much of the early support was gained for special motives; temperance supporters believed that the provision of public libraries were the cheapest form of police, by providing the pastime of reading good quality literature. The relationship between the public libraries and education was not clear; some supporters believed that public

libraries should provide only educational reading, and not recreational reading, particularly fiction. The battle of the great fiction question raged for many years, but by the late nineteenth century librarians were taking the balanced view that "public libraries were intended for recreation and amusement as well as instruction" and that "the issuing of healthy fiction was for the public good." (5) Although the public librarians were very much the tool of their respective committees, these purposes of the public library service were reflected in their stocks, so the management had also become persuaded by the liberal views.

Approximately forty public library authorities had come into existence in England and Wales by the end of the second decade, and these were mainly in the major cities and provincial capitals. They were mainly in the north and northwest of England, which, as Edward Edwards explained, was "due largely by natural influences of trade and commerce." (6). However, there had been an early, albeit unsuccessful attempt to adopt the Act in Exeter. On 20 January 1851 a meeting was held in the Guildhall at the request of nearly four hundred of the largest ratepayers of the City. A certain Mr. Wilcocks had offered the use of the Corn Exchange free for the remainder of his lease of the building, he had also offered to donate one hundred books, and another gentleman promised one thousand volumes. An early decision was needed. The debate was interesting. Supporters of the public library movement argued that there was no longer any question about whether the rising generation should be educated - the question was whether Exeter needed a library for "the improvement of labouring classes" (7), and they believed it did. The opposers argued that this would be better through subscription than through the rates because the City was heavily in debt. This meeting, which had only a small attendance, carried the motion "That it is expedient to provide a public library and museum for the instruction and recreation of the inhabitants of this city, ..." (8), and a requisition was sent to the Town Council which then arranged for a poll to take place. The poll firmly rejected the adoption of the *Public Library Act* 1850 by 852 votes against and 118 votes in favour; clearly in the two months which elapsed between the meeting and the poll ratepayers had been made to realise the financial implications! (9) Nevertheless, Exeter was still the first place in Devon to adopt the Acts although that was not for another eighteen years, and was only the second in the whole of the

Southwest, where the first was the Somerset town of Bridgwater in 1860. The second, successful, attempt by Exeter to adopt the Acts took place not as the result of any public clamour for a public library, but very much as a secondary consequence of the primary scheme for a museum and premises for a school of art and science. The Museum was built as a memorial to Prince Albert, and the idea that it should include a public library was mooted about the time the building started, when the Commissioners of Patents offered the City publications to the value of £2,000 provided that suitable accommodation could be found (10). The Acts were adopted on 6 May 1869, and the subscribers and donors transferred the Albert Memorial building to civic ownership. The building was opened officially on 21 April 1870. The first public library in Devon therefore had its accommodation readily provided, but suffered the handicap of being an afterthought to the Museum and having to share the penny rate with the competing Museum and School of Art and Science.

From about 1870 onwards the number of public libraries began to increase more rapidly; in the next decade the total approximately doubled, and in the decade 1880-1889 virtually doubled again, with an impressive 139 public library authorities being established in the last decade of the nineteenth-century to make the total in England and Wales approximately three hundred (11). There were several reasons for the increasing rapidity of growth. These included the great advance in elementary education following the 1870 Education Act and subsequent Acts which extended the reading population gradually to all age groups as the first generation of compulsorily educated children grew up and swelled the reading public. The problem of the penny rate was alleviated by alternative financing for museums and technical education. The Library Association was established in 1877 and did much to assist the spread of public libraries through publicity, advice on legislation, its concern with improving not only services but also improving the position and qualifications of library staff. The benefactions of Andrew Carnegie and John Passmore Edwards enabled many new library authorities to overcome the major stumbling block of the cost of a library building.

It was at the beginning of this period of rapid library expansion that Plymouth adopted the Acts, being the second place in Devon to do so. This was achieved in 1871 by a large majority of

single-minded supporters who seemed to see it as a natural development following the advances which had taken place in elementary education. The Library opened in 1876 and developed very rapidly and successfully under the zealous W.H.K. Wright, Borough Librarian 1876-1915, a founder member and active member of the Library Association. Plymouth achieved a high reputation for its public library, which was a pioneer in the field of school library services and local history collections. Wright became very influential in the spread of public libraries in Devon and Cornwall, acting as adviser to Devonport, Torquay, Newton Abbot and other places (12). Unlike Exeter, Plymouth Public Library had the full benefit of the rate income. Bideford was the third place to adopt the Acts in Devon, in 1877, followed by Devonport in 1880. Unlike Plymouth, which had to operate in an unsuitable building (the old Guildhall), Devonport had what was then perceived as a major advantage of purchasing the building and library of the former Devonport Mechanics' Institute. Subsequently enthusiasm waned when it was found that the first claim on the annual income for twenty years was a sum to discharge the debt thus incurred; and the initial bookstock, which was therefore secondhand, could not be adequately maintained and renewed. The rate income was also shared with museum and school services. Add to this depressing picture a succession of early librarians who were not well equipped for their job, and an interesting contrast appears in the public library history of adjacent Plymouth and Devonport. When the Three Towns amalgamated in 1914, the Devonport Public Library was taken over by Plymouth Public Library, and this appears to have been one of the few non-contentious matters between Plymouth and Devonport. Stonehouse never did adopt the Acts.

Plymouth Public Library became pre-eminent among the public libraries of Devon and Cornwall, most of which were established much later. It was the most westerly library until 1893 when Falmouth, Camborne and Penzance adopted the Acts in Cornwall, followed within four years by eight others. The particular incentives were the benefactions of Octavius Allan Ferris (13) and John Passmore Edwards (14). In Devon, the library authorities established after Devonport were Newton Abbot and Moretonhampstead in 1900, Ilfracombe and Torquay in 1903. In both counties there was then a gap until the two County Councils adopted the Acts in 1924, and it was several years before either of them achieved the same scale of stock and services as Plymouth.

7.1 PLYMOUTH PUBLIC LIBRARY: ITS ORIGIN AND EARLY DEVELOPMENT

The question of adopting the Public Library Acts for Plymouth does not appear to have been raised until 1871. Certainly there does not appear to have been any local interest in the early Public Libraries Acts to judge by the lack of reports or comments in the local press at the time legislation was being enacted. There are a number of possible reasons for this apparent lack of concern. Perhaps the people of Plymouth were not at first conscious of a lack of library facilities, for there were several libraries in existence. Middle class general and professional interests were catered for by the Plymouth Proprietary Library, the Plymouth Institution's Library, the Plymouth Medical Society and Plymouth Law Society libraries, etc. There was the Plymouth Mechanics' Institution, various working men's clubs, and from 1860 the Plymouth Mutual Cooperative Improvement Society , providing with varying degrees of success some library facility for the working classes. There were many newsrooms, and plenty of small societies clubbing together to buy and circulate books, pamphlets and periodicals. The Armed Services,too, provided some library facility for servicemen from about 1840. Nor did Plymouth have an obvious need for a rate-supported museum, for the Plymouth Institution's Museum was believed to be a fine one and adequate for the town. The civic leaders were too much exercised in the 1850s and 1860s with more immediate problems - housing, health, trade and commerce - to take special interest in the possibilities of public libraries. Perhaps, if they did consider the matter, the problem of finding accommodation for the library would have been a major stumbling block. It seems to have been an increasing local consciousness of the importance and effect of elementary education, shared with many others up and down the country, which eventually resulted in the adoption of the Acts in 1871 with very little opposition. At this time the Forster Act was much in mind, and the Plymouth School Board was setting up a system of new schools, so education was much in evidence. The battle which had engaged public opinion for the last few years, whether or not to build a new Guildhall, had been decided in favour of having a new one, and before long the old Guildhall would become available for other purposes; why not a public library?

The credit for the establishment of the Plymouth Public Library is attributed mainly to Mr. R. C. Serpell, the Mayor of Plymouth in 1871.

He attended the annual Fyshinge Feaste which is held to commemorate the bringing of the water supply to Plymouth by Sir Francis Drake, and

> "... in the course of one of those practical but free conversations which are customary on such occasions, the question was asked, 'What shall be done with our old Guildhall when the new one is ready for use?'" (15)

Various proposals were made, but did not catch the imagination.

> "Not so", said Mr. Serpell. "... the building, though ugly, is not old; .... Why not turn it into a free library and reading rooms - it contains everything you can want for that? If money is needed to start the project, I shall be happy to give £100." (16)

The idea seemed to meet with some favour. The Mayor himself could not properly take any direct action, but one of his friends Mr. F.P. Balkwill talked the matter over with others, who thought it ought not to be allowed to drop; they organised an official requisition to the Mayor to convene a meeting to consider the establishment of a free library for the borough (17). The meeting was held on 6 October 1871 in the Guildhall, and proved to be an influential gathering of the foremost local clergy, politicians, professional men and businessmen. Amongst them was the influential local newspaper proprietor Isaac Latimer, who proved to be a staunch friend of the library over the next few years, giving maximum favourable publicity whenever the excuse arose. The local press seems to have been strongly supportive of the public library movement as soon as action began to be taken. An editorial on the morning of the meeting provided its readers with the background to the meeting and pointed out reasons to support the establishment of a public library in Plymouth, which was "somewhat behind most other large towns" in that respect (17). After touching upon the value of reference and newspaper reading facilities, and the even greater privilege of borrowing books for home reading, the editorial pointed out that the best proof of their value was the astonishing extent to which reading rooms and libraries were being used elsewhere by all classes of the community. "Even in Exeter, where the movement is still in its infancy, nearly 300 volumes per week are withdrawn from the library, and from 700 to 900 persons frequent the reading rooms daily, ..." (18). It went on to inform readers that a 1d. rate, producing about £650 in Plymouth, would be mostly taken up by accommodation expenses if a building had to be rented; but as a building could soon be available (i.e. the old Guildhall),"a halfpenny rate will probably suffice to pay for the librarian, cleaning, gas and periodicals." Some slight income would be derived from fines, sales of catalogues, etc., but this would be swallowed up by binding and printing charges. The problem was,

therefore, how should the books be procured? It would be a slow process to buy them from the penny rate; to depend upon donations would be precarious and would result in a heterogenous collection deficient in modern and standard works. The answer was, inevitably, to raise a subscription of about £1,000 to procure "a library of really valueable works, and the necessary bookcases and appliances ..." Once the library had been established, a penny - or even halfpenny - rate would be sufficient to keep it in working order. It is evident from the practical considerations thus shown in the editorial that considerable planning had gone on behind the scenes, and that lessons had been learned from the problems of other public libraries.

The evening meeting proceeded smoothly (19). The Mayor, Mr. Serpell, opened the proceedings by outlining the origin of the public library movement, and describing the beneficial effects of lending libraries, reference libraries and reading rooms, particularly on the working classes. He recalled that some towns had difficulty in starting a library because they lacked suitable building, but Plymouth would not have that problem as there would be plenty of room in the new Guildhall or the old one could be adapted. He did not believe there would be any difficulty raising sufficient money to provide and fit out the library, and a ½d. rate would be sufficient to maintain it. The meeting then gave its attention to four resolutions. Most of the debate centred around the first resolution:

> "That the meeting, being impressed with the value of the higher education of all classes of the community, considers the establishment of a free library and reading room for the Borough of Plymouth under the Free Library Act desirable."

It was proposed by Mr. Alfred Rooker, who was prominent in educational affairs in Plymouth. He emphasised that a free library was not for one section of the community only, the working classes, but was also for the most learned and most leisured men. It would be of particular value to ambitious young men of every class. He referred to the Plymouth Proprietary Library as being for the private use of a couple of hundred gentlemen who could afford it - that collection now consisted of some 12,000 volumes but was not generally available for use. The motion was seconded by Rev. J. Aldis, whose remarks seem to confirm that his audience consisted of the elite of Plymouth or else they would seem to be somewhat likely to give offence!

> "He knew that there was only a part of the population interested in that matter. In any class of the community it was the few only who thought. ... Few people had the faculty of using libraries - it required a certain amount of brainpower, which the majority had not got; and with many people the taking of a book into their hands was the sure prelude to their going to sleep. The few, however, must be cared for; ..."

During the ensuing debate, supporters urged that the libraries would enable children to continue their education after they had left school. There was only slight opposition. The protest at the extra burden on the rates was countered by ridiculing the idea that the extra rate would be felt by the mass of the population. Even on a £20 house the extra rate would be only 1s. 8d. per year, and:

> "It was the duty of the higher classes to do what they could to elevate the lower, and that duty was all the greater if the ignorance of the lower classes was so great that they did not know what they needed."

Besides, it was argued, the free library rate would repay them in the end by saving in the poor rate and police rates. The resolution was then carried by a massive majority; only four voted against, and the meeting consisted of more than sixtysix people so the proportion in favour must have been not less than 15:1.

The second resolution caused some discussion on its exact meaning, but it was contended that the choice of old or new Guildhall was left open, and the resolution was passed, with four against:

> "That the removal of the municipal offices from the present Guildhall, and the erection of the new hall, afforded the town an opportunity for providing for the reception of a free library and public reading room in Plymouth at a small cost."

The third resolution provided for a memorial to be presented to the Town Council, asking them to take the necessary steps towards the adoption of the Acts, and for a committee to be appointed to make the necessary arrangements. The resolution was carried, and "a large and influential committee appointed." The final resolution,

> "That voluntary subscriptions should be solicited from the Town for the establishment of a free library, relying for its future support upon the public rates, and that the subscription lists should be opened at once."

was passed unanimously. Mr. Serpell headed the list with his promised £100, Mr. Rooker gave £50 and promised another £50 if the fund reached £1,500. Other £100 donations were received from Messrs. T.H. Bulteel, Alger, and Rev. T.A. Bewes. At the close of the meeting over £568 had been promised, and by mid November the total had risen to nearly £900 (20).

The Committee appointed to arrange for the memorial to the Town Council did their work quickly, and at the Borough Council meeting on 18 October 1871 it was resolved, upon the motion of Councillor Hubbard, that:

> "...the Mayor be, and he is hereby, requested to convene a Public Meeting of the Burgesses of the Municipal Borough of Plymouth, pursuant to the Public Libraries Act 1855 in order to determine whether the said Act shall be adopted for the said Borough." (21)

The meeting was arranged for 3 November, and was preceeded by another encouraging and informative editorial on 1 November, which commented:

> "No opposition has been raised, nor is any serious opposition contemplated, for it is thought to be incredible that in a town such as Plymouth any seconder could be found to a motion to reject the magnificent offer which has been made to give a Public Library, purchased at a cost of some £1,500, on condition that the town spend a small amount annually in providing for its free use." (22)

So far, the initiative had been entirely with the middle classes. Indeed, the preliminary meeting on 6 October had been held at noon, when working class ratepayers were not free to attend, but it was explained that this was only a preliminary meeting and that any formal meeting to adopt the Acts would of course be held on an evening. Now the working men of Plymouth began to show a positive interest in the local public library movement, and they held a meeting at the Mechanics' Institution on 2 November, under the chairmanship of Mr. Williamson. The motion under consideration was:

> "That this meeting approves of the formation of a Public Free Library for Plymouth, believing it will prove a valuable means of education in the community, especially the working classes." (23)

It is interesting to note that the proposer was Mr. Goodanew, one of the pioneers of the local Cooperative Society and at one time its librarian (vid. sup. p. 273). The resolution was carried by a large majority, only four voting against it. A particularly noteworthy feature of the discussion was the general view of the working men in relation to "patronage" by the middle classes. Mr. Goodanew pointed out that the position of working men absolutely precluded them from educating themselves and of taking to themselves a means conducive to their well-being and prosperity. A certain Mr. Pike thought that

> "They ought to be very thankful to the gentlemen who had come forward as subscribers to the project. He did not believe working men were able to do all themselves without the middle classes going along with them." (24)

He further commented that the small attendance at the meeting showed that the working classes did not know what was good for their own welfare. The motion having been carried, the meeting decided unanimously to form a committee "for obtaining support of the working classes to a Free Library, either by the raising of subscriptions or in any way that might render assistance to the movement." Perhaps it was from this kind of encouragement that small donations reached the Subscription List, such as 11s. from "the men of Mr. Smith's Printing Office."

The meeting to adopt the Acts was held on the evening of 3 November at the Mechanics' Institution, and was a comparatively uncontentious affair (25). Once again the Mayor opened the proceedings by outlining the origin of the public library movement, its success in Exeter, the advantage Plymouth had with the availability of accommodation and nearly £900 in subscriptions. He stressed the advantages for young people, but everybody would be able to gratify a taste for literature which would be created by the *Education Act*, reaching to the "lowest stream of society and elevating them to a position in the world." Mr. Rooker proposed the only motion: "That the Free Libraries Act, 1855, be adopted for the Municipal Borough of Plymouth." He described the libraries of Liverpool and Manchester, and expressed the belief that although Plymouth could not expect to have a reference library like Manchester of 50,000 volumes at once, they could expect before long to have a library which should far exceed any other library in the west of England. The lending library should contain a fair proportion of books for amusement, and a large proportion of books for instruction such as history, science and philosophy. It was important that the job should be well done, and subscriptions should be increased to about £2,000, with £1,000 for the Reference Library, £500 for the Lending Library, and £500 to fit up the building. He concluded by emphasising that the public library was not a class movement or a political movement, and it would only be a small rate, but one from which much was expected. Nothing new came out of the discussion following Mr. Rooker's speech. Mr. Williamson, probably the chairman of the working men's meeting on the previous day, spoke strongly in favour. He hoped that the 6,000 burgesses in the population of 67,000 would not exercise their power to save a penny in their own pockets but would act in the interests of the improvement in intelligence of the town. He wanted the working man

to enter the library as his right, not as charity. Indeed, he remarked drily, there was a fallacy with regard to rates; the shopkeeper really did not pay them - customers pay them in the extra cost of the article sold, and in point of fact the shopkeeper was only a rate-collector and not a ratepayer! After other speakers had again touched upon the advantages to young people and working men, the resolution was put to the burgesses and was carried "by an overwhelming majority, only 40 or 50 holding up their hands against."

Consequently the Town Clerk reported to the Borough Council on 9 November (26) the resolution of the Burgesses to adopt the Acts, and the matter was scheduled for consideration at the next meeting. On 27 December the Borough Council resolved to set up a committee to report on measures advisable for carrying the resolution into effect; the members were Messrs. Serpell, Hubbard, Rooker, Kelly and Brown (27). Mr. Serpell, who had been the initiator of the public library movement during his term of office as Mayor, had now become the Treasurer of the Committee of Subscribers (28); Mr. Hubbard was the Councillor who brought the memorial to the Town Council's notice; and Mr. Rooker had been the proposer of the main motions at the public meetings. The nature of Messrs. Kelly and Brown's interest in public libraries is not clear, nor is the nature of this Committee's action. The Committee was re-appointed in 1872 with the Mayor as ex-officio chairman and the omission of Mr. Kelly (29); in 1873 Messrs. Watts, Kelly and Howland were added to the existing members (30). The Municipal Offices Committee reported to the Council in May 1873 on the future use of the old Guildhall (31), but it was not until 8 September 1874 that the "Free Library Committee" resolved that the rooms recommended for the Free Library, (large hall, council room, treasurer's office and magistrates' room), were very suitable for the purpose and should be appropriated (32). The Library Committee's report and recommendation was received and adopted by the Borough Council on 14 October 1874 (33), when the latter also resolved that a Free Library Committee should be constituted one of the standing committees, and should consist of thirteen members, of whom seven should be appointed from the Council, including the Mayor ex-officio, and six members from outside the Council. For the next two years the precise membership is uncertain, although Messrs. Serpell and Hubbard provided continuity, working with the Land Committee on plans for the necessary adaptations to the old Guildhall.

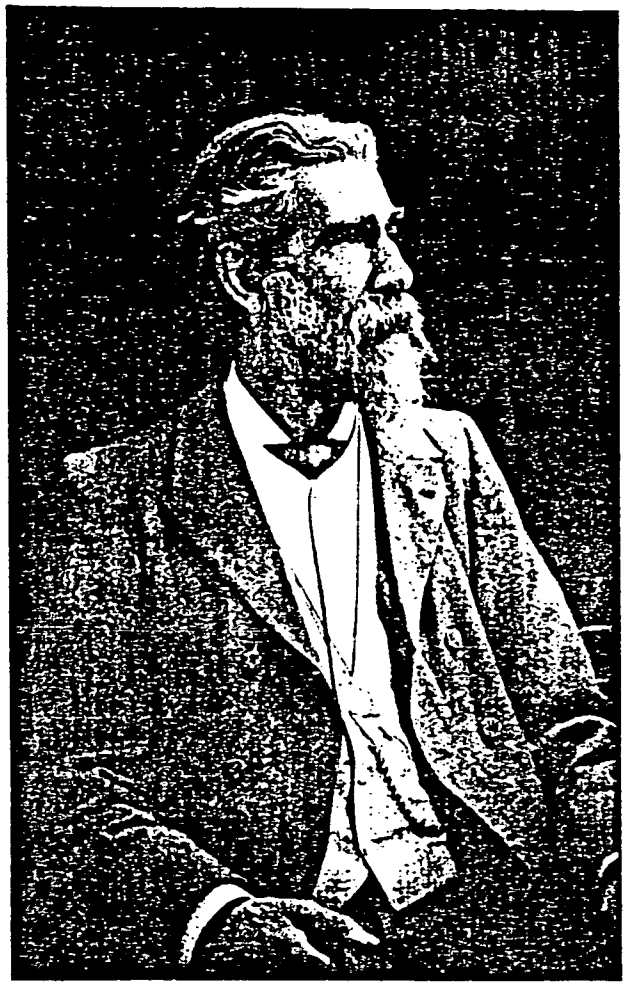
Mr. Rooker died and was replaced by Alderman Derry on the Free Library Committee on 14 July 1875 (34). The record becomes clear in late 1875, when seven Council members of the Library Committee were named (35), and at their meeting on 31 December they resolved to ask the Committee of Subscribers for nominations to the non-Council seats (36). The Subscribers unanimously appointed Mr. Serpell, who had now retired from the Council, and five other names were determined by ballot, in which the Rev. F. Anthony and Mr. John Shelly junior were among the successful candidates and began many years of valuable service to the Free Library (37)

The Free Library Committee now entered a particularly busy phase. The adaptations were going ahead, and preparations had to be made towards opening the library. Fittings, stock and staff were needed. On 22 January 1876 the Borough Council agreed to the request for £300 towards the expenses for the year commencing 1 January 1876, and also determined the precise terms of reference of the Free Library Committee:

> "Resolved that the Free Library Committee be authorised to exercise all the powers vested in the Council for the management, regulation and control of the Free Library under the Acts, relating thereto as fully as the Council might exercise the same, and that it do at the close of each year submit to the Council a report of their proceedings, with a statement of their receipts and expenditure during the year." (38)

Now that the Committee had both clear terms of reference and financial support which could be applied to requirements other than books, it was in a position to appoint a Librarian, which it proceeded to do as quickly as possible. The successful candidate from about thirty applicants was William Henry Kearley Wright, who took up the post on 17 February 1876 (39) and remained Borough Librarian until his death in 1915. During the course of nearly forty years' service he was responsible for many achievements and innovations which gave Plymouth Free Public Library a good reputation locally and nationally, and it seems appropriate at this point to sketch his biography. (Fig. 29).

Wright was aged 32 years when he was appointed Librarian of the Free Library. He was a Plymouth man, from a family background which lacked any special advantages of birth or education. He was educated at the Plymouth Public School, and began his career with a



William Henry Kearley Wright,
1844-1915.

Fig. 29 W.H.K. Wright, Borough Librarian of Plymouth, 1876-1915.

post in the Plymouth Bank of Deposit; when the bank failed, he was employed by the South Devon Railway Company. The railway employees formed a library, and Wright was chosen Honorary Librarian on account of his studious habits. This experience was useful in helping him to obtain another post of Honorary Librarian of the St. Andrew's Working Men's Association. Thus it was with a somewhat limited background that he became the Borough Librarian and found his metier. It is clear that he threw himself whole-heartedly into his work, and on numerous occasions the Committee paid compliments to his zeal and competence. He became a founder member and a Vice-President of the Library Association, and he attended every annual conference, where he made full use of the opportunity to visit libraries and meet as many librarians as possible. He contributed many papers to professional conferences, especially on school libraries and local collections. He was the founder and editor of *Ex-Libris Journal*, editor of *Western Antiquary* and *Devonia*. He was a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society, President of the Plymouth Institution, and wrote many articles and books on local history. In local circles he was well known as a popular lecturer, a fine singer, and elocutionist, and he enjoyed taking part in amateur dramatics. Whilst Wright must inevitably have been somewhat handicapped because of his lack of personal experience in any other public library system and because of the professional isolation caused by geographical remoteness, it is nevertheless difficult to conceive of anyone doing a better job than Wright managed in the local circumstances. He was the outstanding librarian of the Three Towns in the period up to 1914, and was held in respect nationally as one of the most important provincial librarians, although he seems to have received comparatively little attention in professional history.

Having chosen W.H.K. Wright to be "Secretary and Public Librarian", the Committee gave him the congenial first task of visiting public libraries elsewhere to see what was being provided. The first accounts record £17 as his expenses (40). Wright wrote an account of his visits, *Week among the free libraries*, which was published but no copy seems to have survived; but it is known that he visited a number of free libraries in the north of England (41), and these visits must have been of great benefit to the comparatively inexperienced young

librarian, enabling him to study and select ideas for possible implementation at Plymouth. All proposals for service developments or new equipment etc. had to be approved by the Free Library Committee, but it is obvious from the annual reports that the Committee rapidly placed great confidence in their Public Librarian. The first report, 1876-77, recorded that:

> "... they feel also that in Mr. Wright, as Chief Librarian, they have the right man for the place- for whilst developing unusual talent for the special work entrusted to him, he has also shown a deep interest in the work, always so helpful to success." (42)

In the following year there was a similar tribute:

> "They would also express their entire satisfaction with the able and zealous labours of Mr. Wright, the Librarian (upon whose personal exertions and fitness much of the success of the Institution depends), ..." (43)

Similar references occur in reports and accounts of library events throughout Wright's career, and this harmonious working relationship between the Committee and Librarian must have enabled progress to be made with a minimum of wasted time and effort, particularly in the early years when the Committee contained members who were not only carrying out a duty imposed by the Council but were themselves as enthusiastic as their Librarian. Mr. Serpell was the Deputy Chairman, giving continuity in that office until his death in 1886, for the Mayor was Chairman and this therefore changed annually. Rev. F. Anthony, Councillor I. Latimer and John Shelly have already been noted, but another member, Mr. W.H. Luke, the printer and local historian, seems to have been a particularly strong support to Wright. The Committee adopted from the beginning a system of sub-committees for Finance, Book Selection, and General Purposes. Each year it presented its *Reports and Accounts* to the Council, usually in the form of a brief report signed by the Deputy Chairman followed by the Librarian's detailed report and statistical appendices. Fortunately these were published, and a few copies survive, providing the raw material for the following history, for the *Minutes* of both the Council and Free Library Committee were destroyed in 1941.

The Free Library was formally opened by the Mayor of Plymouth on 30 August 1876. He was assisted by the Earl of Morley and the Mayor of Devonport, the latter of whom remarked that the success of Plymouth would encourage Devonport to adopt the Acts (44). It is interesting, and ironic, to find that this public library which many still expected

to be a "cheaper form of police" was actually located in the adapted old Police Court! Apparently a good job had been done in the conversion; no illustration has been found, but the Library was described graphically in a newspaper account of the opening ceremony.

> "The western ... end of the old Guildhall, ... is a public lobby fitted with seats, with the Librarian's desk and counter immediately opposite. The public pass between the counters to the body of the room which is provided with tables and chairs for readers. The book cases occupy the available spaces on all sides, and between them and the public centre there are rails fitted to iron stands within which there is a passage around the hall for the use of the librarian only .... The bookcases are of pitch pine, and the tables of oak, and all the fittings have been specially designed for the building. The adjoining newsroom is conveniently fitted with tables and newspaper stands, and has a good pitch pine dado around the walls. The wall plastering throughout is green, which contrasts well with the colour of the wood." (45)

From the same account it appears that hot water pipes were fitted for heating, and three large gas fittings for lighting. The Plymouth library would seem to have been very similar in appearance to other libraries of the period.

The actual implementation of all services did not take place immediately. The Newsrooms were immediately open to the public, but the Lending Department did not issue books until 28 September, and the Reference Department opened in November (46). However, once opened, they soon became well used. The first annual report covered the period 30 August 1876 to 31 December 1877, and contained a mass of statistics supporting the Committee's view that the Library was a "gratifying success", with "large and increasing use made of it by the inhabitants." (47) The stock consisted of nearly 8,000 volumes, and the first year's issue of lending and reference books exceeded 125,000. In the Lending Department "the whole stock has been turned over nearly thirteen times." Over 210,000 visitors used the Newsrooms, roughly equivalent to three times the population of Plymouth. In 1877 4,500 new borrowers were registered, and 917 renewed. Of the 4,500 new borrowers, nearly 14% were under 15 years old, 25% from 15 to 20 years, 14% 20 to 25 years, 18% over 25 years, and a further 29% whose age was not recorded (including the burgesses, from whom a statement of age was not required on the application form). A system of reader medals was in operation in the Reference Department, and of the 989

medal holders, 26% were under 16 years, 25% 16 - 20 years. From the beginning young people formed a significant proportion of users, as had been anticipated in the adoption debates.

Naturally there was deep interest in the performance of the Plymouth Free Library in comparison with others, and the Librarian obtained statistics from other libraries which he compiled into a comparative table (48). The towns varied considerably in population and the straight statistics which appeared in the original table needed careful interpretation but must have given a good impression to the unsophisticated readers. Wright's original data, which was obtained by correspondence and was more up to date than the published data available from the 1875 House of Commons *Returns* (49), has been converted into ranking order and is shown in Table 23 . This shows that Plymouth fell conveniently in the middle in respect of both population and number of borrowers. Although the most recent library to be opened, it ranked 17 in respect of bookstock; it ranked first in turnover of stock and eighth in total issue, but this is not surprising for the stock was small and had a novelty value in the first year. Neighbouring Exeter, with half the population of Plymouth, had a slightly larger bookstock but less than one third the number of Plymouth's borrowers, one fifth of Plymouth's issues, and a stock turnover of only 2.49 in comparison with Plymouth's 12.98 . This must have given local gratification although tactfully not expressed in print. If the number of borrowers is converted into a percentage of the population and again ranked, Plymouth falls fractionally into 12th. place, and Exeter into 19th. Such statistics are only approximate, for the date of the annual returns varied from 1875 to 1877, the population figures used were from the 1871 Census, and a variety of recording methods were used in the libraries themselves. Despite this, the results do suggest that the Committee's satisfaction with the first year's work was justified. The basis had been established and now had to be developed and consolidated. How this was done will be shown in the following sections in which the main services are described in turn.

Table 23. The ranking of Plymouth Free Public Library amongst other selected public libraries in 1877.

	Date of opening	Population	No. of borrowers	Stock of books	One year's issue	Turnover	Borrowers as % of population
Salford	1849	4	4	1	3	16	9
Bolton	1853	8	8	9	12	14	11
Sheffield	1856	2	1	2	2	12	4
Cambridge	1858	20	19	10	15	18	15
Walsall	1859	15	10	13	17	19	5
Cardiff	1861	10	17	15	19	15	16
Blackburn	1862	9	6	12	18	17	6
Nottingham	1867	7	12	8	7	8	14
Dundee	1869	5	7	4	4	10	13
Exeter	1869	19	20	14	20	21	19
Leicester	1869	6	2	11	6	3	1
Leeds	1869	1	3	3	1	4	17
Wolverhampton	1869	12	5	5	13	20	2
Bradford	1871	3	14	7	5	7	21
Rochdale	1871	17	15	6	9	11	8
Middlesbrough	1871	18	9	19	14	9	3
Hereford	1871	21	21	21	21	13	20
South Shields	1873	16	13	18	10	5	7
Stockport	1875	14	16	16	11	6	10
Swansea	1876	13	18	20	16	2	18
Plymouth	1876	11	11	17	8	1	12

(Based on a table in the Borough of Plymouth Free Public Library Committee's *Report 1876-7*)

7.2 PLYMOUTH CENTRAL LIBRARY SERVICES, 1876 - 1914

For most of the period 1876 to 1914 the Central Library carried out its work in the old converted Guildhall (Fig. 30). The building had little merit other than that it did enable a public library service to be established. From the beginning, it gave problems in terms of space and suitability. Initially only a part of the building was allocated to the Library - the large hall which became the Library, the Council Chamber and Magistrates' Retiring Room which were thrown into one large reading room, and the Treasurer's Office which became the private office of the Librarian (50). Immediately this proved inadequate. In the first annual report the Librarian pointed to the need for a quiet room for magazine users and lady readers, separate accommodation for juveniles, and extra space for the Patents which had been offered by the Mechanics' Institution. Step by step the Committee acquired use of the whole building by 1883, but even in 1882 the Committee reported that the present building was becoming too small for the increased demand placed upon it (51). Thoughts were already in train about a new building, but it took thirty years to achieve that ambition. Most of the developments described in the following pages took place within the not unusual but problematic circumstances of insufficient and inappropriate accommodation. From 1882 to 1910 the stock quadrupled, the issues trebled, and each new service implemented required some space for operation. The Carnegie building (vid. inf.) came none too soon in 1910.

7.2.1 The Lending Library

The Lending Department opened on 28 September 1876 and rapidly became very popular with readers. For the first few weeks the statistics were published weekly in the *Western Daily Mercury* to demonstrate its success to a wider public, and comparisons were anxiously made with other libraries. In the fourth week the daily average issue had risen to 256 volumes and the number of registered borrowers had risen to 1,400.

> "This, with a small library comprising only about 4,000 separate works, or about 7,000 volumes, is a very fair report, and bears favourable comparison with other towns having a far larger stock of books at their disposal. From a report of the Exeter Free Library dated 1874 we

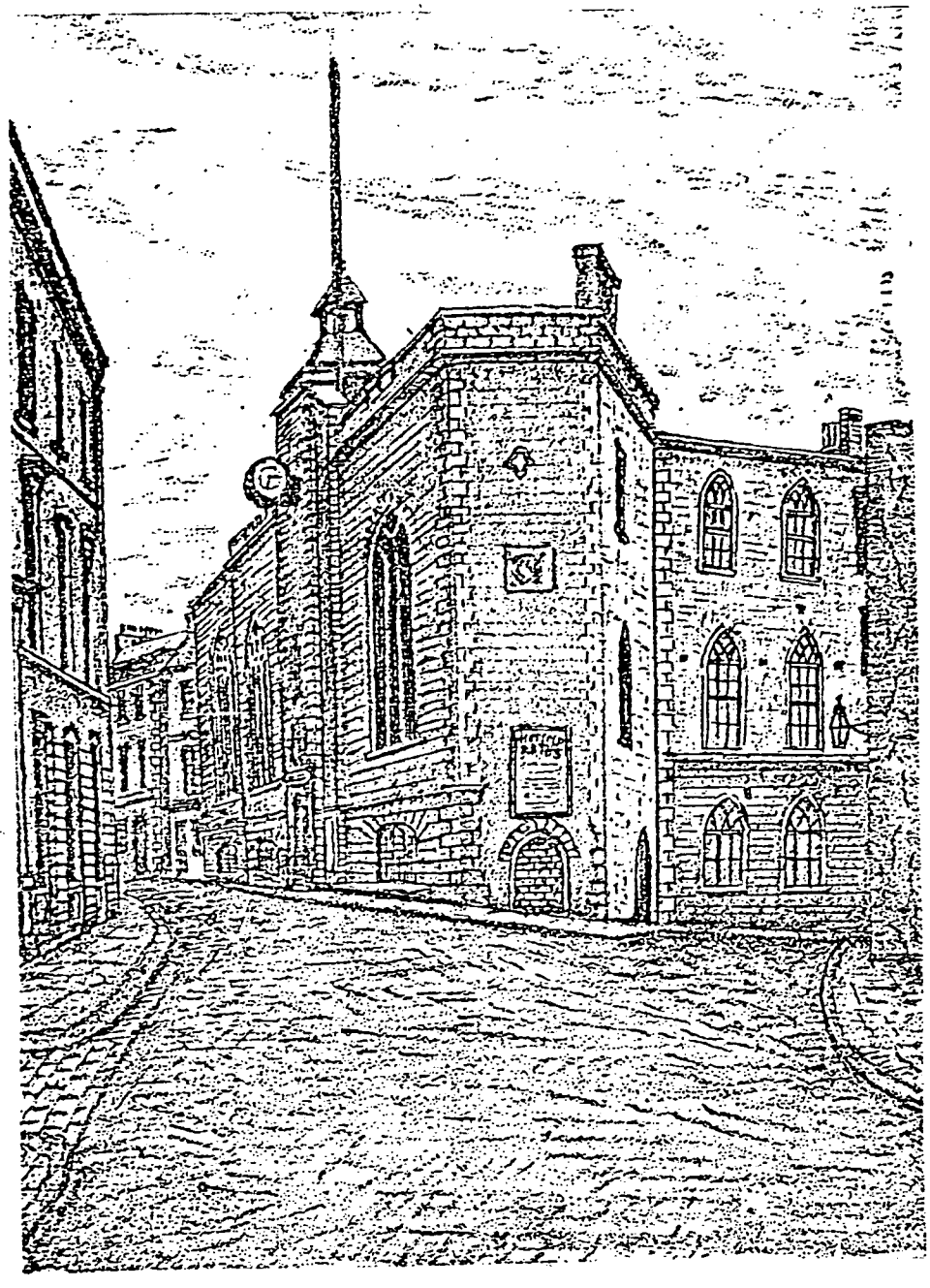


Fig. 30 Plymouth Free Public Library, 1876.

> find their daily average recorded at 85 volumes, at South Shields, which is perhaps a fair comparison, we find that the average last year was 243 volumes, while it is interesting to note that there are issued within a hundred, as many volumes in a day in our library as in Bath in a week." (52)

By the end of the first fifteen months over 115,000 issues had been recorded and 4,500 borrowers registered. The lending stock grew from nearly 7,000 volumes in 1877 to nearly 15,000 in 1887, 23,000 in 1902, and 30,000 by 1914. The considerable expenditure involved in maintaining and developing this stock was justified annually in the reports by detailed analyses of the issues, identifying daily and monthly highest and lowest issues, explaining temporary drops and increases, and showing the Council statistically, and sometimes qualitatively, that the Lending Department continued to be successful.

No doubt it was a popular and successful Department, but if the basic statistics for 1876 - 1914 are analysed it could be argued that it was a static service! Although the stock increased from 7,000 to 30,000 volumes, the number of borrowers fluctuated around an average of about 2,750 for the whole period; the average for the first ten years was 2,640, increasing slightly to 2,794 in 1901-1909; in 1913-14 the actual number was 2,828. The issues reached over 150,000 in 1882 and fluctuated narrowly around the same figure up to 1914. Yet during this period the population of Plymouth had risen from about 70,000 to 113,000. Superficially, it appears that the lending service had declined in popularity despite the increased resources, but in fact, the statistics do not reveal the whole truth. The Lending Department originally provided the stock and service for young people, most of which later separated from it to become the highly successful School Library Service. It also provided the nucleus stock for the branch libraries which became separate; and it also provided loan stock to a few institutions, such as the Workhouse and Police Force (vid. inf.), none of which appears in the Lending Department registration statistics and issue figures. The Department had not been as static as the statistics suggest, and the services and branches engendered by it will be examined in other sections of this chapter.

The Lending Department consisted of a reader space surrounded by a barrier behind which the library staff collected and returned volumes to the sixteen feet high bays of shelves. The lending stock

was arranged in ten subject classes which were similar to those found in other libraries in these days before the adoption of standard classifications (53), viz.:

Class A Theology, philosophy, etc.
Class B Biography and correspondence
Class C History, voyages and travels
Class D Law, logic, political economy, education, essays,etc.
Class E Arts, sciences and natural history
Class F Poetry, classica and the drama
Class G Fiction and works of imagination
Class H Miscellaneous literature
Class I Magazines and reviews
Class J Juvenile books

Within each class the books appear to have been arranged in accession number order, again a common practice (54). The problem was how to make the contents known to the readers. A Catalogue was published in September 1876 and was rapidly sold out; the rapid expansion of stock soon left it out of date and not worth reprinting. The method adopted by Wright to solve the problem of advertising the stock, and keeping a record of issues, was the popular one of introducing a library indicator. This was done in early 1879, when additional shelving for 10,000 volumes was provided by reducing the readers' space, and the Indicator was fixed and put into working order (55). The type of indicator selected was similar in size and form to the popular Wolverhampton model, but Wright incorporated a number of ideas of his own which he described to the Library Association at its Annual Conference in 1879 (56). The result was the "Library indicator-catalogue", a piece of equipment thirty feet long, about three feet high, resting on a sloping desk for borrowers to write their application on. It housed ten thousand tin shelves, each with a fixed number and title slips. Each class had a separate section, clearly headed, so that readers could go to the section in which they were interested. A simple colour code showed the reader if a book was not available - red for 'borrowed', white for 'binding', blue for 'withdrawn'. The charging system, based on the principle of charging the book to the borrower and described in detail by Wright, was combined with the Indicator, and, cumbersome though the multiple entries seem in modern times, it was described as a rapid method in which mistakes were rare. Borrowers soon learned to use the Indicator and found it "a wonderful convenience", leading to

the marked increase of issues in higher branches of literature by bringing to the notice of users many books which had previously lain idle on the shelves. In 1880 Wright introduced a further refinement by providing a different colour application slip each week for six weeks, which revealed overdue books at a glance; this principle had also been adopted in some other libraries such as Sheffield and Newcastle, so Wright was not claiming to be its inventor. However, his methods at Plymouth were professionally interesting in these early years of public library development, and Wright was appointed a member of the Library Association's Indicator Committee. The *Report* of the Indicator Committee in 1880 (57) advocated the keeping of an additional issue record besides the indicator record itself, for security reasons, and mentions Plymouth as one of the libraries practising this fail-safe method; it also listed the types of indicator in use, without any order of merit, and it is interesting to note that the list placed Plymouth's Indicator in a class on its own as an invention of Wright and Stanlake (the builder who constructed it to Wright's specification), instead of including it as a version of the Elliot (Wolverhampton) model.

The introduction of open access in public libraries in 1894 was noted by Wright in his 1893-94 annual report, and he appeared then to favour it in principle but felt that :

> "... however desirable, cannot be carried out in our present premises, owing to the height of our shelves and the cramped character of our Lending Library." (58)

However, he did recognise in 1896-97 that the charging system was out of date, and reorganised it on the card system, in which the borrower was charged to the book (59). From January 1897 this new system, which required the reorganisation of the Indicator and the issue of a small folding ticket to each borrower, was working and was reported at the end of the year to have worked well (60). With no new building in sight, the Indicator was enlarged and rearranged in 1903 (61) to provide space for several years' accessions. By the time the new library building arrived, Wright had doubts about open access in lending libraries, probably because of the problems of thefts and vandalism, and the indicator and closed access were transferred into the Lending Library of the new building, where it was still in use, with no plans for its abolition, in 1914. In fact, in 1913-14 Wright was proposing an expanded or revised indicator! (62) This retention of closed access was probably the reason why Wright was

described in an obituary as having "ideas of administration ... somewhat conservative and old fashioned .... Whether he was wise in restricting the introduction of the 'Open access system' to a section of his library (Reference Library) is perhaps questionable." (63)

The actual administration of the lending service seems to be much the same as other libraries of the period. In 1881 a system of reserving books was introduced, which was much appreciated (64). Readers could borrow a multi-volume work provided that it did not exceed three volumes (65). In February 1902 students' tickets were introduced which enabled the student to have a second ticket upon which a non-fiction work could be borrowed (66) Fines were exacted for overdue books, at the rate of 1d. per week normally, but 6d. per week for the non-return of books at the specified dates for the halfyearly recalls, which were operated in the early years for stock checking purposes (67). The Lending Library (as it began to be known after the Reference Department and other stock had been removed from it) was open for extended hours, at first from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. Mondays to Saturdays, but reduced slightly to 9 p.m. closing in 1883. By 1903 Wednesday hours had become a half day, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., and Saturday restored to 10 p.m. closing. These hours enabled the working class readers to have adequate access, and the occupation details of new borrowers show that membership did indeed come from the groups of people which had been anticipated. There was always a small representation of the professions, but their use tended to decline instead of increasing, for example in 1877 there were 32 medical men, in 1914 16; legal profession, 13 and 5; clergy 26 and 10; Army and Navy, 53 and 24 respectively. Teachers consistently rated about 5 - 8% of borrowers, and schoolchildren and young people also formed an intensive group of users (vid. inf. p. 321). These were predictable, and the interesting groups are the less predictable occupations. In fact, the numerically highest groups are quite consistent throughout the period 1876 to 1914. By far the largest group was that of clerks and book-keepers, who formed about 10% of the total borrowers, usually with 200 - 250 registrations per annum. The other most numerous class was teachers, already mentioned, followed by several groups each fluctuating between about 1 - 3%, but roughly in descending order of size: shop assistants, drapers, errand boys, carpenters/joiners, milliners & dress-makers, apprentices, and shop-

keepers. Other groups with sizeable representation from time to time included: bakers, telegraphists, painters and glaziers, grocers, merchants, railway officials, printers and compositors, domestic servants, commercial travellers, and so on. This is an obvious reflection of the commerce of Plymouth and the retail trades supporting the increasing population, described in Chapter 2, and offers nothing of a surprising nature.

What did they read? Some indication is given in Tables 24 and 25. Table 24 shows the stock in each class in 1877 and 1914, both in actual figures and in percentages. Tables 25(a) and (b) show the actual and percentage figures for issues in the same period, 1876-1914. Classes I, K and L refer to stock which could be consulted only in the Library, and will be disregarded for the present. The remaining classes were lending stock for home reading. It will be seen that in 1877 the main demand fell directly on Class G, the fiction stock, which accounted for half of the issues; class J, juvenile books, accounted for over 14%, so that these two classes between them accounted for about 64% of the issue. The other home-reading issues accounted for less than 19%, with Class C, history, voyages and travel, the most popular with nearly 10% and Class B, biography, nearly 3%. By 1914 the fiction and juvenile stock had been subdivided into extra classes because of the growth of branches and the school library service, but in the comparable classes the adult fiction accounted for at least 23% and juvenile and school issues for nearly 59%. Apart from the Classes I, K and L, which were still reference issues only, the only non-fiction classes to receive more than one per cent were B, C, E and F, viz. history and biography had been joined by Arts/sciences/natural history and Poetry/classics/drama as the most-read subjects. The actual stock percentages show that initially a balance of stock was sought, with the greatest concentration in the areas which were expected to be the subject of demand - particularly fiction, and history and travel. By 1914 the reference stock and local literature had grown to a total 43% of the stock, and the classes in which the main demand for home-reading fell formed less than 30% (G 14.2%, J 1%, S 13%). The reason for the latter comparatively low figures was not lack of attention to the classes, but the usual problem of intensive demand resulting in heavy wear and tear and high replacement rates, so that the net gain

Key to the subject classes shown on Tables 24 and 25

A	Theology, philosophy, and religion
B	Biography and correspondence
C	History, voyages and travels
D	Education, political economy, etc.
E	Arts, sciences, and natural history
F	Poetry, classics and drama
G	Fiction (prose)
H	Miscellaneous literature
I	Magazines and reviews (bound volumes)
J	Juvenile works
K	Works of reference
L	Devon and Cornwall Library
M	Music
R	Books for the blind
S & T	School and branch libraries

Table 24 . Plymouth Free Public Library stock, 1876-7 and 1913-4

Class	1876-7 (actual)	1876 (%)	1913-4 (actual)	1913-4 (%)
	vols.		vols.	
A	326	4.1	1,644	2.3
B	744	9.4	3,537	5.0
C	1,637	20.8	4,876	6.9
D	145	1.8	1,243	1.8
E	487	6.2	2,231	3.2
F	469	5.9	2,253	3.2
G	1,373	17.5	10,094	14.2
H	431	5.5	250	0.4
I	759	9.7	3,855	5.5
J	473	6.0	702	1.0
K	666	8.4	16,410	23.2
L	368	4.7	14,016	19.8
M			351	0.5
R			---	---
S			9,183	13.0
Total	7,908	100.0	70,665	100.0

Table 25 . Plymouth Public Library issue statistics, 1876-1914.

(Based on annual statistics in the *Annual reports 1876-7 to 1913-4*)

(a) Actual statistics

Class	1876/77	1880	1890/91	1900/01	1913/14	Average 1876-1914
A	689	1,858	777	1,006	3,601	1,757
B	3,699	4,837	2,474	2,939	6,177	3,996
C	12,057	10,954	6,974	6,066	7,015	7,345
D	514	749	358	583	2,905	1,253
E	2,252	4,111	2,207	3,125	5,838	4,506
F	1,618	2,758	1,095	1,265	7,459	2,900
G	62,499	84,068	64,813	62,228	92,439	75,290
H	2,732	2,859	2,038	134	------	1,576(a)
I	7,968	14,036	9,362	6,607	8,188	9,077
J	18,047	24,335	104,404	8,920	18,866	23,482
K	9,087	17,025	32,133	62,128	66,071	48,592
L	3,897	4,261	5,217	4,126	10,934	5,222
M	------	------	------	1,025	2,142	1,805(b)
R	------	------	------	135	136	181(c)
S & T	------	------	------	219,553	170,506	169,261(d)
Total	125,059	171,851	231,852	379,840	402,277	290,580

(b) Percentages

A	0.55	1.1	0.35	0.25	0.9	0.6
B	2.95	2.8	1.05	0.75	1.55	1.4
C	9.65	6.3	3.0	1.6	1.75	2.5
D	0.4	0.45	0.15	0.15	0.7	0.5
E	1.8	2.4	0.95	0.8	1.45	1.5
F	1.3	1.6	0.45	0.35	1.85	1.0
G	50.0	48.9	28.0	16.4	23.0	25.9
H	2.2	1.65	0.9	0.05	-----	0.4(a)
I	6.35	8.2	4.05	1.75	2.0	3.1
J	14.45	14.2	45.0	2.35	4.7	8.1
K	7.25	9.9	13.85	16.35	16.4	16.7
L	3.1	2.5	2.25	1.1	2.7	1.8
M	-----	-----	-----	0.25	0.55	0.3(b)
R	-----	-----	-----	0.05	0.05	0.03(c)
S & T	-----	-----	-----	57.8	42.4	36.2(d)

(a) average 1876-1901 (b) average 1898-1914 (c) average 1896-1914
(d) average 1891-1914

in stock size was a very slow process. The actual figures for each class are shown in Table 24 , from which it can be seen that Class G grew from under 2,400 volumes in 1877 to over 10,000 in 1914, and that the juvenile/school stock in Classes J and S grew from less than 500 volumes to nearly 10,000 in the same period. Extra space in which to store the expanding lending stock was first of all gained as other areas of the old Guildhall were taken over by the Free Library and converted into space for the Reference Department and Local Department, leaving the Lending Department with the whole of the original library area which then began to be called the Lending Library. Afterwards, space for stock was found simply by reducing the space available to readers and producing simple over-crowding!

Two classes of material were added to the Lending Library in the late 1890s. One was Class M, Music, which had a steady popularity among a comparatively small group of specialist users; and the other was Class R, Books for the Blind, which had a chequered history but deserves brief attention.

Wright never missed attending the annual Library Association conferences, and always evaluated new ideas from them in terms of possible Plymouth application. In 1886 he was impressed by a paper by J.P. Briscoe on the subject of books for the blind (68), and reported to the Free Library Committee that the idea had found favour among librarians, that several of the chief libraries provided books for the blind, and there was a considerable demand for such literature, which was not expensive (69). He had prepared a list of books for the blind, but it was ten years before he was permitted to start such a service. The Committee was clearly not convinced that there was an urgent need. Indeed, if Briscoe's formula of 1:1,000 was applied to Plymouth, the number of blind people in 1886 would have been about 80 , and by 1896 about 95 . In the latter year the Committee authorised the establishment of the service, possibly spurred on by the offers then being made by Miss Arnold, founder of the National Library for the Blind, to supply books to public libraries (69). More than 100 volumes in Braille and Moon type were purchased, together with some periodicals, and placed in a new Class R. Issues began in November 1896. In the second year the stock was increased to 255 items, and it was reported that the demand was "steadily advancing" (70). In

reality, however, the demand was already declining! The 1896/97 issue of 302 in five months, averaging 60 per month, was the peak issue - the average per month in successive years was 38, 21, 19, 11 and 6 respectively. In 1902/3 Class R was effectively disbanded, and about 140 books were returned "to the Society from whom they were borrowed", and the remaining volumes were handed over to augment the small collection at the Institution of the Blind at North Hill, "there being little or nor demand for them here". (71) That was not the end of the service. It was probably in anticipation of a larger number of potential users after the amalgamation of the Three Towns that fresh arrangements were made in 1913/4 with the National Library for the Blind to receive a selection of books in braille each month, and Class R was re-established. The preliminary experience showed that the books were much appreciated, and it was planned to extend the service in the near future (72).

7.2.2 The Reference Library

The Reference Library began as a small Reference Department in the same room as the Lending Department, although it did not open until November 1876, several weeks after the official opening. Open access was given to atlases, directories and similar works kept on the reading room tables, but readers had to apply to the staff for other reference stock. Casual users could fill in an application slip on each occasion, but people who wanted to use the reference stock frequently could apply for a 2d. reader's medal, which made the form filling unnecessary after the initial application had been accepted. The reader's medal system was adopted from the beginning and apparently proved popular. In the first fifteen months nearly one thousand medal-holders were registered, of whom 26% were under 16 years, 25% from 16 to 20 years, and 49% adults. The most numerous occupation groups were schoolchildren, 121, and clerks, 155, and, as in the Lending Library, there was representation from the envisaged professional, commercial and retail groups. (The occupations of the casual users were not included in the statistical tables). The medal, which had been designed by John Shelly, was a brass oval disc, on one side of which was the Plymouth coat of arms sourrounded by the words "Plymouth Free Library open daily from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m." On the other side appeared the reader's registered number, surrounded by the words "This ticket is issued subject to the Rules and Regulations".

The initial stock of the Reference Library was very small, 666 volumes, and the earliest reports record that the volume of reference work was low because of the paucity of stock. This was remedied as quickly as possible. In 1879 extra rooms on the upper floor were taken over by the Library and were fitted up as a separate Reference Library, opened on 29 August, with a member of staff assigned to supervise it(73). Immediately the use increased dramatically, from 4,466 issues in 1879 to over 17,000 in 1880, although the stock had only increased to about 2,000 volumes. More shelving was added in 1881, enabling all the reference stock and the associated Devon and Cornwall stock to be housed together. The Librarian's plea in 1881 for more standard works to be provided was probably met, for by 1884 the stock had doubled. However, not all of the new additions were of practical value, for 1,600 volumes consisted of the Plymouth Medical Society's donation in 1884 of its older library books. Many of them, reported Wright, were purely medical and somewhat out of date, but, he added philosophically, they were not valueless from a literary point of view (74). In the same year the Reference Library room was extended to double its capacity, with rooflighting being introduced so that all of the wall space was available for books. Unfortunately the proposed publication of a catalogue had to be postponed because of lack of funds, and the Committee agreed instead to a handlist being prepared as some form of guidance to users.

The stock of the Reference Library appears in the general Library statistics as Class K, but in fact it was subdivided into the following classes, which roughly parallelled the main classification:

A Biblical and religious works
B Biographical works
C General history, travel, etc.
D Dictionaries, encyclopaedias and other comprehensive works
E Arts, science and natural history
F Poetry, drama and the classics
G Fiction and general literature
H Heraldic and genealogical works
I Magazines, reviews and newspapers
J General topographical works
K Specification of Patents and Abridgments
L Devon and Cornwall

Apart from Classes K and L, which will be considered separately, the most heavily used class was I, magazines, reviews and newspapers. In descending order of popularity there usually followed D, well ahead of the group G, E, C and F; followed by J and B; and finally, trailing far behind, A and H. This pattern remained roughly true regardless of the growth in total volume of issues, which reached over 50,000 by 1913/4. The latter figure does not, however, adequately represent the number of books consulted, for since the opening of the new library building in 1910 the Reference Library had been open access.

7.2.3 The Patents Collection

The Patent Office had originally supplied its publications to Plymouth Mechanics' Institution, where they accumulated in an untidy and unsorted condition, not readily usable by any enquirer. As soon as the Free Library was a fait accompli the Institution offered the patents to the Free Library, which at first lacked sufficient space. Nevertheless, in the expectation that space would be found, the authorisation for the transfer was sought and received from the Commissioners of Patents. In 1879 a room on the lower ground floor was prepared, and Plymouth Borough Council made a grant to cover the cost of removing the patents and also to compensate the Committee of the Mechanics' Institution for their costs in storing the collection (75). The transfer took place in February 1880 of the large mass of papers, consisting of patents from 1617. The papers filled 600 ft. of shelf space in the basement, and the *Indexes, Journals, Reports* and *Abridgments* overflowed into the Reference Library upstairs. Not only did the collection take up a lot of space, it also took about one man-year to rearrange and sort it ! (76) The heavy resource input was apparently thought to be justified by the prestige value of being the only town in the South-west to have a complete set - the nearest were at Bristol and Southampton. However, the actual usage was low, probably because of the non-industrial nature of the area. In 1884 a peak issue of nearly 3,000 issues was reached, followed by a rapid decline to 269 in 1888/9, an uncharacteristic increase to about 2,000 around 1897 (perhaps connected with Queen Victoria's Jubilee celebration?) and a return to the doldrum 234 in 1901. At this point any pride in having the only collection in the area was outweighed by practical considerations, particularly

that of space. The Librarian recommended that the collection of patents should be returned to H.M. Stationery Office, to which the Committee agreed. In 1901 nine and a half tons were duly despatched, at the unheard-of postal charge of over £10 even using the cheap waste-paper postal rates! (77)

7.2.4 The Devon and Cornwall Library.

The fine Devon and Cornwall Library, destroyed in 1941, had a reputation among librarians for being one of the best local collections in the country. It achieved its collection through a positive policy carried out over a long period, and owes its establishment and strong early development to W.H.K. Wright. In 1876 the idea of a local collection was not a new one - several public libraries such as Manchester, Birmingham, Bristol, and many others - already had local collections, but Wright played a part in promoting the spread of this service. In a paper to the Library Association in 1878 (78) he wrote:

> "Permit me ... to observe, that I have no intention to take credit to myself for any originality in this matter. The idea is not a novel one , ... The only originality I can lay claim to is in the introduction of the matter to your notice ..."

In the paper, he stressed the need for good catalogues of local collections, the librarian's need for special knowledge of the works in this field, and the need to look up and rescue old and rare works from destruction. As a museum should have collections representative of the natural history etc. of its district, so should a library have collections on all matters relating to its town or country. The British Museum maxim "accepting everything, disdaining nothing", should be applied. At Plymouth, he had already begun to practise what he preached in his paper.

The early debates on establishing a public library at Plymouth do not seem to have mentioned the possibility of a local collection, and it seems very likely that this idea took shape after the appointment of Wright in February 1876 and his initial tour of libraries in the north of England. The first reference to a local collection seems to be in May 1876:

> "As Birmingham has its Shakespearean Library, so it is

> intended to form a separate department for the works relating to Devon and Cornwall or which may have been written by natives or residents of these two western counties." (79)

The Library Committee needed little persuasion, "encouraging me in this special work, believing that it will be of service in the future" (80). At the time the policy was established, there was no public library in Cornwall, and only Exeter in Devon. The increasing attraction of Plymouth as a regional centre for Cornwall and much of Devon by this time made the geographical scope a logical choice.

In the very first report on the Plymouth Free Library there appeared Class L, Devon and Cornwall Library, with an initial stock of 368 items. The first few annual reports constantly drew special attention to this collection, inviting in turn donations by authors, publishers, book collectors, readers, and secretaries of local institutions, culminating with the circulation of a special appeal for donations of local books and money in 1882 (81) In that year the Devon and Cornwall Library was moved to a permanent location in the Reference Library, but already the allotted shelves were full and more space was urgently needed not only for books but for readers because Class L was the most heavily used section of the Reference Library. In 1889 it was placed in a separate room adjacent to the Reference Library. It then consisted of over 4,000 volumes and pamphlets, but even so another appeal was made for more donations in 1890. In about 1892 the local books from the Lending Library were transferred to the Devon and Cornwall Library, and it was made the broad policy that the collection was for reference use, with only a few items being issued for home reading (82).

The cataloguing of this special collection proved something of a permanent problem. At first the stock was included in the general library catalogue published in 1876, and its supplement 1878. From 1879-1887 the Library's additions were printed as appendices in the annual reports, and as select lists thereafter. In 1880 it was planned to produce a separate Devon and Cornwall Library Catalogue as Part 3 of the new catalogue intended to cover the whole stock; but the financial failure of Part 1 led to the postponement of the rest. It was not until 1892 that the first separately printed *Catalogue of the Devon and Cornwall Library* was published, based on manuscript

catalogues. In 1903/4 Wright reported that he was preparing a card catalogue of the Local Collection (83); it seems that a determined attempt was being made to catalogue all of the "accumulation of years" in this flexible new format, for in 1906/7 it was reported that 527 local prints had been catalogued, and in 1913/4 it was reported that all local prints, maps and portraits had been included in this card catalogue. By 1914 the stock had grown to over 14,000 items, many of them being rare and unique, but destined to be destroyed in the Blitz of 1941. Unfortunately this also included unique copies of catalogues and documents relating to the early libraries of Plymouth which are listed in the published catalogue of 1892!

7.2.5 The newsrooms.

An important service provided by the early public libraries was the newsroom facility, particularly before the fall of newspaper prices to a level which almost everyone could afford; but even then, the libraries provided a wide range of daily newspapers, weekly journals, monthly periodicals and quarterly reviews, together with a scatter of miscellaneous casual literature, which attracted a variety of users. In the larger libraries there might be not one newsroom but perhaps a series, catering not only for the general reader of newspapers,but lady readers, young people, readers of the more academic journals who needed quiet conditions, and so on. Plymouth gradually acquired some facility for this variety of readers.

The Newsroom was the first service of the Plymouth Free Library to be put into operation, on the official opening date, 30 August 1876. Open from 9 a.m. to 10 p.m., Mondays to Saturdays, it contained about twenty newspapers and journals fixed on stands, one table for lady readers, and other tables for quarterly, monthly and weekly publications respectively (84). Readers soon filled and crowded the facilities, and even the provision of extra stands in 1878 by moving the Ladies' Table to the Reference Library was inadequate. In 1879 the old committee room was added to the newsroom and was divided for the use of ladies and for readers of reviews and higher class magazines seeking comparative quiet. If the cold of the initially unheated rooms had not deterred users, the installation of a large slow-combustion stove in 1880 probably encouraged them in winter.

A one-day survey in January 1883 revealed 1,687 visitors.

In 1882, as the Library took over more space, a separate Ladies' Room was provided, and their former room was made into the Review Room, a quiet room for general readers. In 1884 an extension of the Library resulted in more space for the Newsroom, which was now about 60' by 20'(85). The Review Room was given up to lady readers, but in 1888/9 it was reported that there was again a need for a separate magazine room because of the crowding in the general Newsroom. At this time, hopes were beginning to rise for the acquisition of a site on which to build a new library, but hopes were dashed and an alternative programme of adaptations was carried out. The Newsroom remained in the basement (i.e. at ground level), but the rearrangement during adaptations seems to have restored the facility of a Magazine Room, for in 1905/6 it was possible to hold lectures in the Magazine Room as part of the library extension activities.

The ladies' reading facilities have been indicated in the above outline. Starting with a separate table in the Newsroom in 1876, a temporary move to the Reference Library in 1878, and the use of part of a room in 1879, at last a separate Ladies' Room was provided in 1882. Several special papers and duplicates of illustrated and other weeklies were provided for this room. Unfortunately, within a couple of years, the ladies were considered to be the chief offenders in pilfering magazines from the newsrooms! Supervision of the newsroom complex was probably very limited, for although the Library had a "Hall-keeper" in 1876, replaced by a caretaker/cleaner in 1882 who might have helped to supervise the rooms, it was not until 1893/4 that a special newsroom attendant was appointed.

The supply of literature to the newsrooms was apparently quite generous in quantity and broad in its scope. By 1882 there were 14 daily newspapers, 88 weekly journals, 60 monthly magazines, and 12 quarterly reviews. In addition, there was a selection of annuals, railway timetables, and such other casual literature as might be available. Much of the literature was donated, and nothing seems to have been turned away. In the first year, 19 papers and railway timetables were donated by their publishers, 12 by various "friends", and 8 provincial papers and various weekly journals by the Editor of the Western Morning News. The expenditure on newspapers and magazines in 1876/7 was £56, rising

to £73 in 1884, and nearing £100 by 1893, after which the establishment of branch reading rooms caused the duplication of subscriptions, and at least a doubling of expenditure.

7.2.6 Library provision for young people

Library provision for young people was still in the pioneer stages in public libraries when Plymouth Free Library opened in 1876. The nature and extent of such provision varied (87). Manchester was the first to establish a special service, with the opening of a separate reading department for boys in 1862, with its own stock of literature. Other noteworthy collections of juvenile literature were provided at Birkenhead in 1865 and Birmingham in 1869. The next decade, according to Ellis (88), brought about "Noteable examples of library work with young people ... at Cambridge from 1872, Manchester from 1878 ..., Plymouth from 1879, and Newcastle upon Tyne from 1880". Although Plymouth did make early provision for young people, its main pioneering effort was in the establishment of school libraries, which will be studied separately in Chapter 8. This section is concerned with the provision for young people at the Central Library.

Juvenile literature was established as Class J in the nucleus stock, and at the end of 1877 it consisted of 473 volumes, 6% of the total stock; it trebled in size in the first ten years, and rose slightly to form 7% of the whole stock. During that same period the young borrowers, under 15 years, formed between 14% and 19% of the readers (Table 26). The first annual report showed that there were 600 young borrowers, and 259 (26%) of the medal-holders in the Reference Department were under 16 years. In the same report Wright identified the need for separate accommodation for juveniles from the News-rooms, and in April 1878 a separate Boys' Room was established for youths of fourteen years or under (89); the room was the former Old Police Court in the basement, and was open only in the evenings.

> "This room has been partially furnished and supplied with a small stock of Juvenile Works. The object of its establishment is to endeavour to withdraw from the streets some of those youths of the age of fourteen and under, for whom accommodation cannot be found in the general News-rooms.
>
> This end has been gained to a certain extent; nearly 200 boys

> having been entered as medal holders; the issues of books having been about 2,500 volumes, besides small papers which have been laid upon the table from time to time. This room is not opened during the summer months.
>
> Complaints having been made of the misconduct of some of the lads frequenting this room, I have had occasion to stop several medals, and have forbidden their holders the use of the room for a time. I purpose shortly suggesting some changes in the arrangements connected with this department, in order to make it if possible more effective in the future." (90)

Unfortunately it must be assumed that the complaints continued, for the experiment came to an end in the late spring of 1879.

> "This Department was opened for a short time only at the commencement of the year, but from various causes it was considered inexpedient to re-open it at the beginning of the present winter. 1,288 volumes were issued in this room during the months of January, February, and part of March .... I have added the small stock of books to the Juvenile Department of the Lending Library." (91)

In the next annual report Wright refers to the desirability of providing a Boys' Table in the Newsroom, but there are no later references to this having been implemented.

The limitations of the building in which the Library operated appear to have prevented any serious consideration to the provision of a separate children's library. Even in the later new building it appears that juvenile literature, Class J, continued to be shelved in a section of the Lending Library. This might have been because the central need for a children's library had been diminished by the time the new building was being designed, through the establishment of school libraries. Another possibility is that the sum donated by Carnegie for the new building was only 75% of the sum requested, and perhaps the design had to be scaled down for that reason. Certainly only five years after the new building had been opened, Wright was reporting that "the want of a children's room under personal supervision is increasingly felt" (92)

The size of Class J fluctuated considerably as the result of school library services. In 1887 when the plan for school libraries was approved, the stock for the service was drawn mainly from a greatly expanded Class J stock. Between 1892 and 1894 the bulk of this stock was transferred into a separate school library stock, Class S, leaving less than 1,000 in the general juvenile stock.

This increased only to about 1,500 by 1913.

Class J issues in the first year were just over 18,000, about 15% of the total issues; at the end of the period, 1914, issues were roughly the same number, but then formed only about 4½% of the Library's total issue. School library issues had grown to a massive 40% in 1914, so that about 45% of all issues were being made to young people in that year.

The following Table 26 gives some indication of the importance of young borrowers as part of the Library's readership. These figures exclude school library borrowers, and therefore reflect the demand on the Central Library. It is interesting to see that there was a slight drop in the figures 1888-1891 when the first group of school libraries began, and again in about 1902 when the service was expanded to cover more schools.

Table 26. Plymouth Free Library. Borrowers under 15 years, 1876-1914.

Year	No.	% of registered borrowers	Year	No.	% of registered borrowers
1876-77	622	13.8	1893-94	323	14.0
			1894-95	295	12.8
1879	429	14.7	1895-96	297	11.9
1880	474	16.1	1896-97	276	10.3
1881	462	17.0	1897-98	293	10.5
1882	484	19.0			
1883	354	13.8	1901-02	157	6.4
1884	370	14.9	1902-03	167	6.8
1885	426	17.2	1903-04	221	8.5
1886	436	16.1	1904-05	402	13.1
1887	410	15.5	1905-06	242	8.2
1888-89	502	14.6	1906-07	264	9.2
1889-90	206	11.1	1907-08	382	12.7
1890-91	243	12.3	1908-09	345	11.9
1891-92	324	14.0			
1892-93	299	13.2	1913-14	421	14.9

7.3 PLYMOUTH PUBLIC LIBRARY: BRANCH LIBRARIES AND READING ROOMS

The establishment of branch libraries was a matter at the forefront of Wright's mind even while he was still wrestling with the teething problems of the central library. In 1877 he read the first paper at the first Library Association Annual Conference in London, on the best means of promoting the free library movement (93), and in it he touched upon the suitability of Board Schools for branch or general libraries. Two years later he developed the theme (94). Public libraries dependent upon the rates for income have very little money left after paying salaries, maintenance, etc., to buy new books, let alone establishing branches or evening reading rooms. Board Schools are spread throughout towns, and have much in common with public libraries - both are ratesupported and are engaged in the education and social welfare of the people. Board schools, however, have supplementary funds, and "while the income of the library is fixed ... that of the school board is virtually unlimited." (95) If the School Boards agreed to provide the room and the gas, and the Library Committees the books, periodicals, and staff, the difficulty of establishing branches would be removed - or at any rate greatly diminished. Such was the scheme Wright proposed to the Conference. He had, he explained, already proposed such a plan in Plymouth and "... I trust ere long to see it carried out." Unfortunately he had to wait and watch others implement the scheme before him. Perhaps even the modest expenditure he envisaged was too great for the Library Committee to commit itself . When funds were available, in 1887, it was the School Library Service which was given precedence, and although Wright referred to the school libraries as *branches*, they did not serve the general public. Wright did not give up, but gave his Committee no peace on the matter.

1880 "Some time since I again laid before you a scheme for extending the benefit of the institution to the outlying districts, by securing the cooperation of the School Board, and the use of some of their rooms as evening reading rooms. The matter was deferred, but I trust that some steps may yet be taken to make some additional provision for the outlying districts." (96)

1881 Again he proposed to open branch evening reading rooms in several outlying districts where large industrial populations lived at a great distance from the Central Library; but it was "not opportune." (97)

1884 The statistics of registered borrowers' residence "lead me to suggest once more how desirable it would be if an arrangement could be made to establish branch reading rooms in some of the Board Schools in those localities which are most distant from the centre of the town, say at Mount St., Sutton Rd., Wolsdon St., or King St., etc. I feel sure such a concession to a public want would be much appreciated ... and, as I believe it is the legitimate outcome of our work, I trust it will meet your most favourable consideration." (98)

1886 The Committee was reminded of Wright's suggestion of a branch in each ward ... (99).

Success was approaching. In 1889-90 Wright reported that early in the autumn (1889) an effort had been made to establish evening reading rooms in Board Schools in some outlying districts; it was favoured by the School Board, but action was deferred to the beginning of another winter, when, it was hoped, several reading rooms with small libraries attached would be established (100). There was a short postponement of the plan because the furniture and arrangements were unsuitable, but the delay was very short, for on 29 February 1892 the first branch reading room was opened by the Mayor in the hall of Cattedown Road Board School (101). An assistant was appointed to take care of the reading room and its small collection of books. Class T was started, to form a nucleus of branch library stock, and this was located at Cattedown Rd. for the use of borrowers and casual readers. Duplicates from other classes were gradually transferred into Class T.

The opening of the first branch in the eastern part of Plymouth led to a deputation from the Western District Ratepayers Association asking for a similar evening reading room in the western end of the town. Wright eventually chose Union St. Board School for its location, the School Board agreed, and this second branch reading room was opened on 23 October 1893 (102). Like Cattedown, it held magazines, newspapers, and a small collection of books for borrowers. Both branches were open 6.30 - 10 p.m., and their use was watched very carefully by the Librarian and the Committee. In 1894/5 Union St. branch was very satisfactory, but Cattedown had not only got off to a slow start with surpringly low usage (less than 2,400 issues and less than 11,000 visits in 1893-4) but suffered from disturbances by "noisy lads", for whom the police were called in several times.

The extension of Plymouth's boundaries to take in Laira and Compton, coupled with long-standing pressure from the Compton residents (103) led to the establishment of the third branch at Laira on 19 March 1897 (104) and the fourth branch at Compton on 27 April 1897 (105). Both were open for the same hours and on the same basis as the first two branches. Each branch contained about 300 books, and a variety of periodicals as shown in Fig. 31 . The periodical lists contained between 35 - 40 titles, including several local daily and weekly newspapers, illustrated magazines, several lady's magazines, *Punch, Illustrated London news, Cassell's family magazine, Naval and military record,* and many others.

During the next few years events moved rapidly as branches were opened and closed in accordance with apparent demand and actual usage. In December 1897 the Union St. Reading Room was closed and transferred to the better location of Oxford St. Board School, where it opened on 6 January 1898 (106) A new evening reading room was opened in Mount St. Board School on 8 February 1898. More branches were still needed to achieve Wright's desire to have one in each Ward, but the considerable expansion of service was expensive and was not being matched by a proportional increase in the income from the library rate (although the town's rateable value had increased considerably). The use of existing branches was closely monitored so see if they were resource-effective. Mount St. Branch was closed May 1899, re-opened October 1900 and finally closed in 1901 (107). Compton Branch closed May 1899 (108). Oxford St. Branch closed 1901 (109). The oldest branch, Cattedown Rd., closed August 1901 (110). The reason given in each case was that the attendance did not warrant the expenditure in supervision and the supply of literature. The total issue for the branches in 1894-5 was less than 2,600, after which branch issues were merged with the school library issues and cannot be isolated again until 1901 when Laira's figures were given, a healthy 17,000 issue. It appears that Laira was the only branch for a while, but on 11 March 1904 an evening reading room was opened at Salisbury Rd. School, followed on 7 October by one at Hyde Park Road Schools. The three branches began to open Saturday afternoons 2.30 - 9.30 p.m. in 1905 for the benefit of those who could not attend in the evenings. Although it was reported in 1908-9 that there was a falling off in the work of the evening branches, partly attributed to the frequency with which rooms at the schools were

LIST OF PERIODICALS

SUPPLIED TO THE

UNION STREET READING ROOM.

D—*Daily.* W—*Weekly.* M—*Monthly.* Q—*Quarterly.*

British Weekly	W	Punch	W
British Workman	M	Quiver	M
Cassell's Family Magazine	M	Standard	D
Cassell's Saturday Journal	M	Sunday at Home	M
Chums	W	Times (weekly edition)	W
Church in the West	W	Tool and Machinery Register	M
Daily Chronicle	D	Weekly Sun	W
Daily Graphic	D	Western Daily Mercury	D
Daily News	D	Western Evening Herald	D
Daily Telegraph	D	Western Figaro	W
Education	W	Western Independent	BI-W
English Illustrated Magazine	M	Western Morning News	D
English Mechanic	W	Western Weekly Mercury	W
Good Words	M	Western Weekly News	W
Graphic	W	Westminster Budget	W
Illustrated London News	W	Do. Gazette	D
Invention	W	Woman	W
Leisure Hour	M	Woman at Home	M
Naval and Military Record	W	Woman's Signal	W
People	W		

LIST OF PERIODICALS

SUPPLIED TO THE

CATTEDOWN ROAD READING ROOM.

D—*Daily.* W—*Weekly.* M—*Monthly.*

British Workman	M	Penny Illustrated Paper	W
Canadian Gazette	M	Public Opinion	W
Cassell's Family Magazine	M	Punch	W

LIST OF PERIODICALS

SUPPLIED TO THE

LAIRA READING ROOM.

D—*Daily.* W—*Weekly.* M—*Monthly.*

Black and White	W	People	W
British Weekly	W	Punch	W
Cassell's Family Magazine	M	Quiver	M
Cassell's Saturday Journal	M	Review of Reviews	M
Chums	W	Standard	D
Church in the West	W	Strand Magazine	M
Daily Graphic	D	Sunday at Home	M
Daily News	D	Times (weekly edition)	W
Daily Telegraph	D	Weekly Sun	W
English Illustrated Magazine	M	Western Daily Mercury	D
Fun	W	Western Evening Herald	D
Good Words	M	Western Figaro	W
Graphic	W	Western Independent	BI-W
Hearth and Home	W	Western Morning News	D
Illustrated London News	W	Western Weekly Mercury	W
Lady	W	Western Weekly News	W
Leisure Hour	M	Westminster Budget	W
Ludgate Monthly	M	Woman	W
Naval and Military Record	W	Woman at Home	M
Pall Mall Magazine	M	Woman's Signal	W
Penny Illustrated Paper	W		

LIST OF PERIODICALS

SUPPLIED TO THE

COMPTON READING ROOM.

D—*Daily.* W—*Weekly.* M—*Monthly.*

Animal World	M	Penny Illustrated Paper	W
Atalanta	M	Punch	W
Black and White	W	Queen	W
British Weekly	W	Quiver	M
British Workman	M	Review of Reviews	M
Cassell's Family Magazine	M	Scribner's	M

Fig. 31 Plymouth Free Public Library. Periodicals in branch reading rooms, 1895.

beginning to be required for political and other community meetings, these three branches at Salisbury Rd., Hyde Park Rd. and Laira all continued to operate until the amalgamation of the Three Towns . However, the statistics shown in Table 27 do indicate a slow fall-off in their usage during that period.

Table 27. Plymouth Public Library: branch libraries and newsrooms

		1904-5	1905-6	1906-7	1907-8	1908-9	1912-3	1913-4
(i)	Issues							
	Laira	11,398	5,973	6,331	6,354	5,448	3,980	4,443
	Salisbury Rd.	4,260	4,588	3,509	3,374	3,234	2,425	2,282
	Hyde Park Rd.	1,433	4,310	4,332	4,070	3,736	2,392	3,844
(ii)	Attendance							
	Laira	10,670	10,247	11,224	11,772	11,493	8,284	8,186
	Salisbury Rd.	13,089	15,739	13,247	13,066	12,405	12,669	13,030
	Hyde Park Rd.	6,257	14,352	14,599	13,957	13,347	11,989	14,003

The reason for the failure of some branches and the survival of others is not easy to explain. In each case there was a reasonable expectation that there was a sufficient need in the surrounding heavily populated areas, but, as at Cattedown Rd., this did not necessarily materialise. Perhaps it is significant that two of the three later and more successful branches were located further from the Central Library, and were perhaps at a sufficient distance to make it less convenient to use the Central Library instead. Perhaps, too, they were in the more middle class residential areas where the habit of reading might still be more entrenched. Almost certainly the size of the loan stock played some part in the lack of success, for the branches only had about 250 volumes each which could soon be exhausted by an avid reader even if regularly exchanged. Another factor seems to be the fact that although Plymouth's residential area was extending, it did not take the form of districts with shopping nuclei of their own. Activity - industry, commerce, shopping etc. - mostly took place in the old town centre, with the Central Library conveniently to hand. All of these factors probably influenced the comparative lack of success of the branch libraries and reading rooms.

In addition to establishing the general branch libraries and reading rooms just described, and the school libraries which have yet to be described in Chapter 8, the Library Committee also agreed to a few other requests for books, which Wright recorded as branch libraries although they are of a different character.

The first of these special loans was to the Workhouse . In 1890-1 the first small stock was lent (111), followed by a second batch in 1892-3 (112). It appears that the volumes were mainly bound volumes of magazines, which were much appreciated and heavily used, for in 1893-4 the stock was worn out and the Master of the Workhouse applied for another batch of books (113). This was probably the beginning of a regular arrangement, for in 1896-7 the Workhouse Library was listed among the "branch libraries" with a stock of 200 volumes (114).

Another small collection was loaned to the Police Library in November 1892 (115). This consisted of 100 volumes, which were augmented and exchanged the following year, and again in 1895-6. In 1897-8 the Police Headquarters in Catherine St. was listed in the annual report as a "branch", although it was qualified as being for police use only. It then contained 150 volumes of public library stock. No further references seem to occur in the annual reports, but Wright mentioned in another source, in 1901, that the scheme was still in operation (116).

An unusual service extension was the loan of books to lighthousekeepers! In 1896-7 it was reported that books were being issued by special arrangement to the men at the Breakwater and Eddystone Lighthouses. Again, the annual reports shed no further light, but in 1901 Wright described elsewhere the usefulness of this service, which permitted each man going on duty for a two month period to borrow one dozen books from the public library, so supplement the provision made by the Trinity Board (117).

7.4 PLYMOUTH PUBLIC LIBRARY AND NON-RESIDENT BORROWERS.

In the early years of Plymouth Free Public Library books could be borrowed only by burgesses or persons resident in or employed in the Municipal Borough of Plymouth. If the would-be borrower was enrolled as a burgess of the town or was a donor of five pounds of more, he did not have to have a guarantor of his application; otherwise he needed the signature of one burgess. A burgess was not quite the same as a ratepayer; a burgess might be on the municipal burgess roll through birth, occupation, or income qualifications. At first, ratepayers who were not burgesses had also to obtain the guarantee of a burgess before becoming a member of the Library. This caused some difficulties for the first few years, but eventually the Library Committee agreed that Wright could accept the signature of a ratepayer on the registration form without guarantor, provided he checked before issuing a ticket; and from 1887 this was implemented (118). This made it easier for local residents to join the Library, and before long, as has been described in the previous section, branches were established in the town. But, how about the non-residents who lived near to the town and would like to take advantage of the Library?

From the beginning it was possible for a non-resident to become a member of the Library provided that he was employed in the town and obtained a guarantor. The number of such members was small; in 1879 it was 59 (c. 2%) and it fluctuated between 50 - 70 for most of the period up to 1914. This was not an adequate provision and it is clear from the annual reports that Wright considered that the inhabitants of the outlying districts should be enabled to use the Library through some appropriate mechanism. He was obviously subjected to pressure from groups of outsiders. Stonehouse was reported in 1880 as being interested in the extension of library facilities to cover its residents, but had not decided upon any course of action (119), and in 1881 the matter was still "in statu quo". In 1882 Wright specifically referred to the desirability of Stonehouse and Compton (from which there was separate pressure) being amalgamated with Plymouth for library purposes. This was, of course, permissible under the Acts. In 1884 there was a preliminary enquiry by members of the Local Board on behalf of the inhabitants of Stonehouse as to the means by which they could secure the advantage of the

Plymouth Library for home reading; but nothing came of it, possibly because of the cost or because of local politics, for Devonport then also had a public library, and the question of amalgamation of the Three Towns and the future of Stonehouse was becoming a live issue. In his annual report for 1884 Wright focussed special attention on the non-residents' problem, envisaging not only Stonehouse but also the surrounding area of southwest Devon to be the natural service area for the Plymouth Free Library.

> "Considering the borough of Plymouth and the township of Stonehouse are practically united, it seems a pity that the inhabitants of the latter town should not have similar advantages from a literary point of view as those of the former. The cost to the ratepayers would be small, and the benefit great, inasmuch as the establishment of a branch at Stonehouse, with a reading room and lending library, could very well be arranged for, besides which the residents of Stonehouse would have the free use of a Library numbering some twenty thousand volumes and other advantages which I need not here enumerate.
>
> In the same way the residents of Mannamead and the outlying districts, now under the control of the Compton Gifford Local Board, might partake of advantages from which they are now excluded, as only those persons who have business or occupation in the Municipal Borough have the right to use the Library, or at least to borrow our books. A movement in this direction ... has had no practical result. Such an amalgamation is to my mind highly desirable, for it would add strength to the general resources, and confer advantages on some hundreds of persons who are now outside the limits of our work. Other outlying districts might also be induced to take steps in the same direction, for I see no reason why Plympton, Plymstock, Oreston, Turnchapel, Knackersknowle, Tamerton and other places might not become affiliated with this town for library purposes, especially as the Acts of Parliament under which these libraries were established contemplated the connection of small places with some central borough. In such cases there is no need to go through the formality of adopting the Acts, as in the case of a town." (120)

The problem of how to provide a library service to individuals living in places which, for some reason, would not or could not become a library district or part of a library district, was common to many librarians, and Wright helped to focus the professional attention of the Library Association onto the issues in 1886, in his paper *Municipal libraries and suburban libraries* (121). In it, he illustrated the national problem by the Plymouth situation, which was familiar to some of the audience who had attended the Library Association Annual Conference in Plymouth the previous year, 1885. His paper is worth

quoting at some length, not only because of the local sidelight it shows, but also because in it Wright was making a contribution to the professional agitation which eventually resulted in the 1892 Act which enabled non-residents to be admitted legally into individual membership of libraries. Wright's wellknown interest in the matter, probably stemming from this paper, led to him being appointed a member of the Legislation Committee which drafted the Act.

> "My case is this. Take, as an instance, a town, the chief and most wealthy suburbs of which are beyond the municipal boundaries, the inhabitants of which do not contribute to the library rate; is it just to admit those persons to a full participation in the benefits of the library? Legally, I believe not. Yet, I think there are some libraries which are by no means particular in limiting their supply in the manner indicated. But here, as in other matters, local circumstances must be the chief guide. However, as this problem may have already been solved by some of my brother librarians, I would seek for their advice and the results of their experience to enable me to advise those for whom I am acting in settling this difficult question.
>
> Plymouth ... is one of a group of towns, three in number, with various suburbs. Devonport is a separate municipality, ... With Devonport, therefore, we have nothing to do, inasmuch as they have now a Free Library established and doing a good work. Stonehouse lies between the boroughs, and its affairs are regulated by a Local Government Board. Here there is no library or literary institution of any kind for a population of about 25,000. But Plymouth and Stonehouse, though separated for municipal and parliamentary purposes, are to all appearance one and the same town, the streets being continuous, and a stranger would find it difficult to discover the line of demarcation.
>
> In addition to this, however, Plymouth has a large, populous, and wealthy suburb to the north-east of the town, which, although included in the Parliamentary Borough, is (as far as the greater part is concerned) outside the municipal boundaries. This suburb is simply an out-growth of the town, but, while for a long time under the control of parochial authorities at some distance, is also now in possession of a Local Government Board; an agitation for amalgamation with the Borough not having found favour with the dwellers in the district.
>
> I may mention, in passing, that the greater number of these suburban residents have business establishments in the town, and consequently derive their income therefrom. Many others are retired tradespeople who have realised their fortunes in the same way. ... the inclusion of a large and wealthy district would be of great importance to the Borough for general purposes, as also an amalgamation of the "Three Towns" for Library work would have materially improved the position and prospects of the whole district, if it could by any means have been brought about.

> It has come to my knowledge from time to time that many persons residing in these suburbs would gladly participate in the benefits afforded by our growing library, but having no qualification either by rating, residence, or occupation, they are debarred from the use of our books for home reading, although their neighbours on the other side of the way (being within the municipal limits) have that privilege. Now, what is the best means of meeting the requirements of these people, in a legal manner, and with proportionate benefit to our library funds?
>
> I have occasionally suggested to leading residents of the district, as well as to those who have made application to me for borrowers' tickets, several methods by which the desired end might be brought about, yet up to this time no action has been taken by the authorities themselves or the people whose affairs they manage. It is not quite apathy, but a want of knowing what is best to be done, and to some extent a want of leadership, for this is a matter which should come from the applicants themselves and not from the Borough library committee, who would of course have some interest in furthering the project."

The solutions Wright put forward in his paper were:

1. The Local Government Board should levy an extra rate and hand the proceeds to the Central Library Authority which would then form a branch library in the district.
2. The relevant local authority should voluntarily allot a small sum annually to the Library funds, in return for which the Library Committee would extend the library facilities to the residents, but would not establish a branch library.
3. Subscriptions by individuals, who would then be entitled to borrow on the same conditions as the regular borrowers.

He rejected solutions 1 and 2 because of the objections of ratepayers to extra rates, and favoured the last one, although he had doubts about its strict legality. For an annual subscription of, say, 10s. all residents within a radius of about ten or twelve miles could become borrowers. This would not infringe the small commercial subscription libraries because they did not supply books required by readers of literature, but the sensational fiction of the day.

> "In conclusion I would say that my Committee are anxious to to what is right and generous, that they are desirous to keep within the law, at the same time giving a liberal interpretation to those matters which are at present vague, and open to various readings. They wish to benefit a large number of their fellow townsmen, who by accident are placed beyond their immediate control, and they wish at the same time to benefit their library funds ... if it can be brought about by legitimate or honourable means." (122)

Apparently no immediate "legitimate or honourable means" was found, and the non-residents of Plymouth had to wait until the 1892 *Public Libraries Act*, which came into force on 1 October 1892. Wright and his Committee wasted no time. On 20 October they circulated details of the new arrangements by which non-residents could borrow books for a subscription of 5s. p.a. The circular was directed particularly to residents of Mannamead, Stonehouse, Plympton, Plymstock, Oreston, Laira, Turnchapel, and even to Stoke Damerel residents (poaching on Devonport territory?). By May 1893 Wright could report that "a considerable number of persons residing in the suburbs" had availed themselves of the advantages offered at such a small charge; but, alas, the financial accounts tell a different story. The annual income from non-residents' subscriptions in the first year of operation was only £4. 5s., equivalent to 17 subscribers; 18 the next year- and a drop to only ten the following year. The explanation probably lies in the imminent amalgamation of Laira and Compton which enabled their residents to take advantage, free of charge, of the Central Library and its new branches in their district.

The total number of non-resident members, qualified and subscribers, increased from 52 in 1890 to a peak of 85 in 1894, dropping to 18 in 1896-7. As more suburbs grew outside the municipal limits, the non-residents number again exceeded 50 in 1908-9; but by 1914 was only 31. Such figures suggest that the problem of non-resident borrowing was one which was primarily kept live by a vociferous minority rather than the vast newly literate majority. The newsrooms and Reference Library were available to all and this was probably of more interest to the business people who lived in the suburbs but commuted daily to the town centre.

7.5 PLYMOUTH PUBLIC LIBRARY : TECHNICAL SERVICES

The services and users of the Library have been considered so far, and although aspects of the technical services have been mentioned in passing, they have not been considered in perspective and will be briefly reviewed at this point.

7.5.1 Stock.

The Library opened in August 1876 with less than 6,000 volumes, and by December 1877 had already increased to nearly 8,000. This initial stock had been made possible by the subscription bookfund raised by Mr. Serpell and supporters since 1871, as previously described. By 1914 the Library stock had increased to over 70,000, a net gain of over 60,000 volumes which ignores the unidentified many thousands of replacements which must have also been obtained during the same period. Table 28 shows the accession statistics, from which it will be readily seen that the highest percentage increases took place in the early years - the stock doubled by 1883 and trebled by 1887. Over the whole period the annual increase averaged about 1,600 volumes, with considerable fluctuations between the minimum in 1909-10 of 895 and the maximum in 1913-14 of 3,418. The peaks normally coincide with identifiable events, for example in 1884 there was the donation of 1,600 volumes by the Plymouth Medical Society, and in 1889-90 there was a build up of the new school library service stock. Troughs normally reflect low bookfund and economy measures; for example from 1894 onwards the Library income had to pay off a Corporation loan for the adaptation programme which had been of an expensive nature. In 1909-10 all available income must have been required in connection with the move to the new building.

The bulk of the stock was purchased, and it was selected with great care by a permanent Book Selection Sub-Committee of the Library Committee. No hard and fast lines were laid down, even at the beginning, apart from books being required to be good class literature over a wide field. The "great fiction question" did not seem to have affected Plymouth, for the need to read for recreation as well as education was well recognised, and light literature formed at least 30% of the initial stock. Borrowers' recommendations were taken into consideration from at least 1897, when special forms

Year.	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	R	S	Totals.	Yearly Increase.
1876-77	326	744	1,637	149	487	469	2,373	431	759	473	666	368	..	..	..	7,908	..
1878..	404	863	1,854	205	595	513	2,686	597	1,116	513	975	583	..	..	..	9,906	1,998
1879..	451	917	1,290	229	661	618	2,795	613	1,227	668	1,426	746	..	..	..	11,261	1,355
1880..	478	967	1,944	256	698	628	2,031	639	1,270	769	1,470	1,091	..	..	..	12,721	1,460
1881..	509	1,024	2,061	289	730	690	2,265	633	1,380	876	2,155	1,397	..	..	..	14,009	1,288
1882..	580	1,086	2,147	311	825	720	2,373	649	1,557	984	2,649	1,666	..	..	..	15,519	1,510
1883..	625	1,109	2,163	324	849	754	2,457	645	1,614	1,047	3,345	2,110	..	..	..	17,042	1,523
1884..	629	1,129	2,220	353	898	782	2,636	650	1,670	1,069	5,200	2,290	..	..	..	19,506	2,464
1885..	636	1,162	2,254	380	959	828	2,811	661	1,754	1,118	5,670	2,655	..	..	..	20,908	1,402
1886..	689	1,282	2,390	424	1,029	848	3,218	741	1,844	1,284	6,480	2,743	..	..	..	22,972	2,064
1887..	708	1,354	2,514	459	1,115	878	3,418	805	1,908	1,734	6,750	2,958	..	..	..	24,602	1,630
1888-89	751	1,433	2,624	479	1,182	918	3,649	892	2,116	2,480	7,045	3,275	..	..	..	26,833	2,231
1889-90	758	1,502	2,688	494	1,210	959	4,049	918	2,159	2,787	7,559	3,895	..	..	..	28,970	2,137
1890-91	794	1,561	2,820	523	1,256	990	4,304	937	2,232	2,934	8,040	4,320	..	..	..	30,732	1,761
1891-92	816	1,618	2,894	601	1,303	1,008	4,582	970	2,314	2,997	8,385	5,464	..	..	..	33,533	2,802
1892-93	867	2,678	2,955	625	1,354	1,075	4,749	981	2,442	3,892	8,630	6,003	..	..	110	35,361	1,828
1893-94	892	1,731	3,037	637	1,406	1,102	5,035	983	2,506	4,290	9,592	6,350	..	..	238	37,799	2,438
1894-95	935	1,777	3,076	657	1,443	1,118	5,203	989	2,588	936	10,063	6,897	..	..	3,074	38,960	1,161
1895-96	947	1,802	3,118	662	1,471	1,144	5,377	990	2,680	967	10,411	7,356	..	..	3,236	40,161	1,201
1896-97	959	1,945	3,205	671	1,567	1,226	5,671	992	2,737	980	10,701	7,789	..	138	3,496	42,076	1,915
1897-98	978	2,291	3,276	688	1,594	1,273	5,937	999	2,856	999	11,087	8,021	..	155	3,837	44,091	2,015
1898-99	985	2,361	3,336	745	1,624	1,316	6,110	699	2,270	1,034	11,461	8,283	81	170	4,004	45,278	1,187
1899-00	1,024	2,438	3,464	756	1,660	1,458	6,154	365	3,906	1,041	11,799	8,373	108	181	4,268	46,197	919
1900-01	1,051	2,513	3,677	773	1,686	1,533	6,323	250	3,088	1,042	12,296	8,709	119	190	4,222	47,572	1,375
1901-02	1,073	2,539	3,733	789	1,698	1,594	6,521	250	3,146	1,057	12,694	9,022	119	190	4,380	48,905	1,333
1902-03	1,286	2,615	3,841	814	1,736	1,688	6,796	250	3,184	1,070	13,023	9,215	187	153	4,676	50,534	1,629
1903-04	1,302	2,694	3,940	827	1,780	1,723	7,130	250	3,261	1,150	13,387	9,367	188	153	5,383	52,537	2,003
1904-05	1,325	2,764	4,038	877	1,812	1,768	7,525	250	3,319	1,183	13,757	9,526	178	153	5,701	54,276	1,739
1905-06	1,363	2,844	4,116	998	1,853	1,791	7,896	250	3,386	1,220	14,058	9,668	309	153	6,092	55,917	1,641
1906-07	1,378	2,937	4,249	941	1,907	1,835	8,375	250	3,398	1,282	14,328	10,297	309	153	6,439	58,078	1,161
1907-08	1,442	3,055	4,337	967	1,937	1,925	8,855	250	3,517	1,331	14,664	10,482	313	153	6,668	59,896	1,818
1908-09	1,463	3,165	4,424	1,003	1,994	1,967	9,246	250	3,529	1,373	14,986	10,687	320	153	6,885	61,445	1,549
1909-10	1,476	3,202	4,491	1,028	2,020	1,004	9,389	250	3,600	1,381	15,231	10,852	336	153	6,927	62,340	895
1910-11	1,495	3,528	4,543	1,051	2,063	1,039	9,451	250	3,636	1,410	15,535	11,435	343	153	7,055	63,687	1,347
1911-12	1,547	3,325	4,641	1,112	2,105	2,092	9,575	250	3,718	1,450	15,865	11,744	344	153	7,139	65,084	1,397
1912-13	1,587	3,430	4,735	1,157	2,134	2,155	9,826	250	3,793	1 501	16,122	12,547	351	153	7,659	67,400	2,316
1913-14	1,644	3,557	4,876	1,243	2,231	2,253	10,004	250	3,855	702	16,410	14,016	351	..	9,183	70,665	3,418

Table 28 Plymouth Free Public Library. Bookstock 1876-1914.

were introduced for the purpose. The statistics suggest, and the available records do not deny, the steady build up across the whole field of literature with concentration on the areas of heavy demand and special application when service expansion required it.

Donations of books and periodicals remained at a useful level throughout the period to 1914. Each annual report contained an appendix listing donors; and their donations were listed up to 1892, after which a separate select list of major donations was substituted. Local dignitaries, committee members and Members of Parliament feature heavily, but the ordinary citizen is also well represented. Plymouth, like many public libraries, received donations from the Trustees of the British Museum consisting of their publications, and Calendars of various State Papers from the Treasury, etc. Occasionally it received donations from other libraries; the original stock contained some books (unquantified) from the libraries of the local Working Men's Institutions (123), the Plymouth Medical Society gave 1,600 volumes of its old stock, and in 1894 the Plymouth Proprietary Library presented 206 volumes of *The Times*. Organisations including libraries donated their annual reports and publications, which were of particular benefit to the Devon and Cornwall Library; by 1914 the latter, Class L, was the second largest class in the Library, after the Reference Library. No evidence has been found of any formal exchange arrangements, although the *Annual Report* was probably distributed widely by Wright on a general quid pro quo understanding among librarians. Plymouth did not have any major benefactors with a special interest in the Library's development, and the stock seems to have lacked any remarkable items of bibliographical interest and value.

7.5.2 Stock organisation.

In 1876 the initial stock was organised into simple subject classes A - L (see key to Table 28), and this arrangement, with the addition of a few classes, remained in operation until about 1930. Books were shelved by a running accession number within each class. This was typical of early public libraries, before the publication and adoption of systematic classification schedules (124), and there is little to note in addition to comments made in the appropriate service sections. By 1902 Class H had been phased out of the issue

statistics, although a remnant of stock lay idle, probably in stack after the class itself had been largely disbanded. In 1892 Class S was established for school library stock, and much of Class J was transferred into it by 1894 and more in 1913-4. Class M, Music, was established in 1898-9 as the foundation of what was to become a very popular department and the precursor of the modern Music and Drama Department. Class R was established in 1896-7 as the new books for the blind service was initiated; but the failure of the initial service resulted in the disbandment of most of the stock in 1902-3, although a few volumes continue to be shown in the stock figures until the re-establishment of the service in 1913-4. Class T was established in 1892 for branch library stock, but both its stock figures and issue statistics were merged with Class S in the annual reports; by 1908 the stock statistics even omitted the former " & T" part of the column heading, so perhaps T became merged with S. The heading of the issue statistics column remained "S & T" even in 1913-4, but perhaps this was an oversight. Some slight inconsistency is therefore visible in respect of Class T, but no records have survived which can resolve it.

7.5.3 Catalogues

The task of cataloguing was a professional one which fell heavily on Wright himself, gradually assisted by senior staff whom he had trained (vid. inf. p.347). In practice, this meant that he was helped by the Chief Assistant, and latterly the Assistant. All of them had other time-consuming duties, as was inevitable with a small staff, and the preparation and maintenance of catalogues was a perennial battle of resources. Fortunately, however, Wright, unlike his early counterparts at Devonport, was keenly aware of the vital importance of making the contents of the Library known to potential users. Unfortunately it is not known how or why he selected as his model the "Index Catalogue" invented by Andrea Crestadoro (125); probably the merits of author and subject catalogues were the subject of discussion between Wright and the librarians he met on his one week visit to the libraries in the north of England in early 1876, and he might have met Crestadoro himself. Wright seems to have been the first librarian in Plymouth to use this simple dictionary catalogue, and he influenced at least the Plymouth Institution and later Devonport Free Library to

copy his example. The first *Index Catalogue* was published in late September 1876, and consisted of 160 pages, double columned, with one alphabetical sequence containing entries for authors, titles and general subjects (Fig. 32). The edition of 672 copies was soon sold out and was re-issued. A supplement was published in 1878, but did not find such a ready market, probably because it was soon followed by the installation of the Indicator which was always kept up to date in the Library. In the light of that experience, it was decided not to produce another catalogue but for the time being to append full classified lists of the year's accessions to the annual reports. This was implemented 1879 and continued to 1887. Wright also recommended in 1879 that the next publications should be separate sectional or Class catalogues to correspond with the individual classes on the Indicator Catalogue; but this does not seem to have been agreed by the Committee. By 1880 the expansion of the stock had made it necessary to publish a new catalogue, which was planned to be on the same dictionary principle as before, but with the stock divided into three sections, viz. Lending, Reference, and Devon and Cornwall. It was estimated that the work would include about 13,000 volumes, represented by about 40,000 entries, and occupy 250-300 pages. The cost of printing was largely offset by the income from the many pages of advertisements which were included as the result of Wright's personal initiative. The undertaking was a major task. Work began in 1880 on preparing the copy, which was fed to the printer in alphabetical sections. By July 1881 the printer had completed up to letter K of the Lending Library section, which was completed in 1882 and sold for 1s. This part was much larger than had been anticipated, occupying 248 pages, with about 25,000 entries. The public response was disappointing, and the price was reduced to 6d. in 1883 in an attempt to sell the remaining copies. In 1884 Wright had to confess that borrowers did not use printed catalogues as much as he would wish, and he could no longer strongly recommend the publication of the projected second and third parts which would have covered the Reference Library and Devon and Cornwall Library. Instead, he proposed to prepare brief classified lists of books in the Reference Library because readers were having difficulty in finding out the works in stock there. These classified lists were apparently manuscript catalogues, which were intended to be only a temporary measure. In 1886 provision was made in estimates for printing the Reference Library *Catalogue*, but it was six years before the

BOROUGH OF PLYMOUTH

FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY.

INDEX-CATALOGUE.

SECTION I.—LENDING DEPARTMENT.

ABANDONED ..... Verne G954
Abbeys, Castles, and Ancient Halls of England and Wales ..... Timbs H296
Abbot. (Sequel to the Monastery.) Scott G111 G577 G1134
ABBOT (E.) etc. Church of the First Three Centuries A128
ABBOTT (Jacob). August Stories: August and Elvie J4
— August Stories: Granville Family J5
— Franconia Stories: Henrys J306
— Jesus Showing Mercy A152
— Life of Elizabeth, Queen of England J510 J599
— Young Christian; or, the Principles of Christian Duty A151
ABBOTT (J. S. C.) Life of Marie Antoinette, Queen of France J600
ABBOTT (Rev. J.) Philip Musgrave; or, Memoirs of a Church of England Missionary of the North American Colonies G1681
Abbots, Last of the ..... Brown J461
Abbotsford and Newstead Abbey. Irving H304
Abdul Medjid Khan, Sultan of Turkey. Christmas C951
A'Becket, Archbishop, etc. ..... Wilks B103
— Thomas: a Biography ... Robertson B143
A'BECKETT (G. A.) Comic History of England. Illustrated by John Leech ... C815
Abel Drake's Wife ..... Saunders G1467
ABELL (Mrs.) Recollections of the Emperor Napoleon on the Island of St. Helena. Revised by Mrs. C. Johnstone C524
Abel Redivivus; or the Lives and Deaths of Modern Divines. ..... Fuller, &c. B707
Abeokuta, and the Camaroons Mountains. Burton C614 C1016
Abode of Snow. ..... Wilson C736
ABOUT (Edmond) Fellah; or, Life in Egypt. Trans. by Sir R. Roberts C374 C952
— La Question Romaine C1220
— Le Roi des Montagnes J535
— Roman Question. Trans. H. C. Coape H74
About in the World. Essays. ... Friswell D180
Abraham, God's Command to. *See* Whiston's Josephus C160
Abraham Ibn Ezra ..... *See* Ibn Ezra
Absentee ..... Edgeworth G1046
Absolute Monarchy, Struggle Against. Cordery C1130
Abstainers, Illustrious ..... Sherlock B337
Abstinence, Total ..... *See* Temperance
Abyssinia and its People ..... Hotten C708
— British Captives in ..... Beke C441
— British Mission to ..... Rassam C458
— Captivity in ..... Blanc C573
— Nile, Tributaries of ..... Baker C432
— Nubia and ..... Russell C241
Achilles Tatius ... *See* Greek Romances F303
ACHILLI (Rev. Dr. G.) Dealings with the Inquisition; or, Papal Rome, her Priests and her Jesuits C151

Fig. 32 Plymouth Free Public Library. *Index catalogue*, 1882.

work was actually published although the printing started in 1889-90. The work, which was in two parts covering the Reference Library itself and the associated Devon and Cornwall Library, was met with acclaim but the small demand for copies did not justify the heavy outlay (126); and it was decided not to continue with the publication of general catalogues. Instead, it was decided to issue a series of sectional catalogues at 1d. or 2d. each. This new policy was carried out in respect of the Lending Library which badly needed a new catalogue. The old one was useless because of the numerous additions which had been made, and the annual reports carried only selections of the additions from 1887. The first sectional catalogues, in the same dictionary format as the general catalogues, were issued in 1896 for Class C History and Class E Arts, Science and Natural History. Class G, Prose fiction, was published in a different format, two sections consisting of author and title respectively; but the fourth list, Class B Biography and correspondence, reverted to the dictionary principle. Each of these lists was 2d., or all four for 6d. The Reference Library *Catalogue* published in 1892 was referred to as Classes K and L in this sequence, and was offered at half price, 6d., in 1901. By June 1905 all of the sectional catalogues of the Lending Library had been published, including a revised, author only, fiction list (Class G) in 1903-4.

The form and maintenance of the catalogues were clearly posing problems, and the serious curtailment of funds by the Council around 1908-9 left little hope of solution. The Lending Library apparently now had manuscript catalogues of all classes in addition to the Indicator-Catalogue record; so had the Reference Library. The inflexibility of these catalogues probably caused the introduction in 1903-4 of a card catalogue in the Devon and Cornwall Library, with the hope being expressed that it would be extended to other departments (127). It is not clear how far this extended - probably not very quickly because of financial and staffing difficulties. By the time of the 1913-4 *Annual Report* there was a serious need for action to make the stock more accessible, and a new general catalogue was being considered by the Committee. The manuscript catalogues were being revised continually, the card catalogues were being added to, but handlists were again needed - for example, the last full listing of Class L was the 1892 published *Catalogue*, over twenty years old.

Despite the problems of the latter years of the period under consideration, the general record of catalogues at Plymouth Free Public Library seems to be a creditable one both in quantity and quality within the limitations imposed by factors such as inadequate resources of staff and money. Certainly Wright himself appreciated the need for the public to be aware of the stock held in the Library. Although he was assisted in producing the catalogues, it seems that the bulk of the work fell upon himself. No wonder he had a reputation for being "never out of the Library".

7.6 PLYMOUTH PUBLIC LIBRARY : RESOURCES

One type of resource, the bookstock, has already been considered in the previous sections, but the more general resources of finance, staffing and accommodation require more specific attention.

7.6.1 Finance.

The Library was almost entirely dependent upon the rates for its income. Each year there were usually a few pounds extra from sources such as fines, and the sale of occasional catalogues, plus subscriptions from non-residents from 1892 onwards; but this extra source of income never became really significant. The total income from extraneous sources, almost certainly including money from the sale of newspapers and magazines, usually formed about £50-£60 per annum from 1876 to the end of the century after which details are missing. The income from the rates was initially £700 p.a., rising to £785 by 1887, after which the income was increased to £1,000 but as there had to be the repayment to the Corporation of loans for the building extension there was no immediate increase in purchasing power. By 1896 the income had risen to about £1,300, and in 1898-9 to £1,593 from the rates. Figures are missing for the next few years, but in 1905-6 the income was £1,750, approximately £400 short of the product of a penny rate. This was probably because the boundary extensions and the rapid increase in educational responsibilities by the Borough Council were causing some alarm over the increased rates required, and economy was being encouraged - or enforced - in existing services. In 1906 there was an immediate improvement to the full one penny rate because Andrew Carnegie offered to build a library for Plymouth on condition that the penny rate, then estimated to be about £2,000, would be available to maintain it. From 1906 to 1914 the Library's income rose from £2,146 to £2,446.

Details of expenditure were included in the published annual reports until 1897-8, after which details are not available. Table 29 shows the figures for the total expenditure and the most important items of expenditure viz. salaries, books, binding, periodicals, furniture and fittings. The total income is also shown.

Table 29. Plymouth Free Public Library. Income and expenditure 1876 - 1898.

(Based on information in the *Annual reports* of the Plymouth Free Library Committee)

	INCOME		EXPENDITURE					
Year	From rates	Total income	Furniture & fittings	Books	Binding	Periodicals	Salaries	Total
1876-7	970	2,168	489	984	42	56	406	2,261
1878	700	764	48	95	90	56	275	772
1879	700	759	113	75	29	66	306	780
1880	700	767	122	131	35	54	321	816
1881	700	754	30	118	73	51	326	813
1882	720	872	36	63	61	66	335	874
1883	720	788	54	103	33	63	352	812
1884	750	823	68	77	77	73	398	879
1885	750	838	6	113	54	72	419	839
1886	785	1,037	55	148	60	67	379	1,041
1886	1,000	850	42	150	60	69	386	882
1888-9	1,150	1,225	55	207	82	102	492	1,162
1889-90	1,000	1,106	59	174	53	88	422	942
1890-1	1,000	1,064	58	193	73	93	430	1,074
1891-2	1,100	1,162	51	215	103	98	405	1,067
1892-3	1,159	1,224	30	213	110	97	445	1,090
1893-4	1,192	1,252	72	236	104	127	449	1,169
1894-5	1,224	1,277	35	275	68	160	511	1,257
1895-6	1,293	1,325	212	188	77	171	555	1,471
1896-7	1,368	1,438	208	206	63	164	621	1,778
1897-8	1,593	1,667	189	201	76	219	730	1,958

It will be seen that in rough terms the total expenditure and income doubled in the first twenty years, and that the individual items of expenditure kept in approximate balance by also doubling, with the exception of the more random expenditure on furnishings and fittings. As the period concerned was one in which book prices were relatively stable, the extra expenditure can normally be interpreted in the provision of extra books, periodicals, and the accompanying extra staffing, for the branch libraries and school library services in particular.

Table 30 is a copy of the last detailed accounts which have been found, in which it can be seen that the expenditure was not far short of the £2,000 which was to be the level of funding 1906 - 1914. Probably it was a similar pattern of expenditure which operated in the latter period, with allowance made for the equivalent of the Corporation loan being available for general expenditure, and some rise in at least the salaries (Wright's salary of £230 p.a. in 1897-8 had been raised to £250 by 1907 (128)).

7.6.2 Staff

It is fortunate that each annual report contains a list of staff names and designations, from which it has been possible to build up a picture of the establishment, staff training, and organisation of the early years of the Library.

Throughout the whole period under consideration W.H.K. Wright was the Librarian, responsible to the Plymouth Free Public Library Committee which was authorised to exercise all the powers vested in the Council for the management, regulation and control of the Free Library. From the beginning, the Librarian was Secretary to the Committee, and this designation preceded his professional designation - "Secretary and Public Librarian". Although he was initially designated "Public Librarian", which seems to have been a usual title, in 1883 it was changed to Borough Librarian, perhaps one of the first to do so, for Greenwood commented in respect of Plymouth that this was "a good designation ... which might be adopted for general use". (129)

County-Borough of Plymouth Free Public Library.

Honorary Treasurer's Financial Statement, from April 1st, 1897, to March 31st, 1898.

RECEIPTS.	£	s.	d.	PAYMENTS.	£	s.	d.
To Corporation (per Borough Treasurer)—				Balance due to Bank last Report	5	10	7
1st Instalment, June 28, 1897 .. £398 5 0				By Second Instalment of Corporation Loan ..	200	0	0
2nd „ Oct. 31, 1897 .. 398 5 0				„ Rent paid to Corporation	35	0	0
3rd „ Dec. 31, 1897 .. 398 5 0	1593	0	0	„ Interest on Corporation Loan	48	12	2
4th „ Mar. 28, 1898 .. 398 5 0				„ Taxes and Auditors' Fees	2	14	4
To Fines received from Borrowers	42	16	8	„ Furniture, Fittings, and Repairs	189	0	11
„ Borrowers' Tickets	11	10	2	„ Librarian's Salary	230	0	0
„ Sale of Catalogues	10	15	0	„ Wages and Attendance, including Branches ..	501	16	0
„ Subscriptions (non-residents)	2	10	0	„ Printing, Stationery, and Advertising	74	0	9
„ Sale of Postcards for Bespoke Books	2	8	5	„ Printing Annual Report	7	1	6
„ Sale of Rules and Regulations	0	13	4	„ Purchase of New Books and Replacements ..	201	0	1
„ Sale of Old Newspapers, etc.	2	0	8	„ Binding and Repairs of Books	76	0	1
„ Sale of Readers' Medals	0	13	4	„ Magazines and Reviews	37	3	2
„ Damaged and Lost Books replaced by Borrowers ..	0	13	0	„ Newspapers	182	15	4
„ Balance due to Bank	291	13	0	„ Gas and Fuel	62	17	3
				„ Insurance	8	0	0
				„ Catalogues and Assistance	41	3	9
				„ Railway Charges, Porterage, etc.	12	4	11
				„ Postages, Notices to Borrowers, etc.	11	15	4
				„ Cleaning and Sundries	14	16	5
				„ Bank Cheques	0	16	0
				„ Bank Charges	16	5	0
	£1958	13	7		£1958	13	7

(*Signed*) GEO. R. BARRETT, *Hon. Treasurer.*
W. H. K. WRIGHT, *Borough Librarian.*

Audited, May 2nd, 1898.

(*Signed*) G. HICKS
THOS. J. PAWLEY } *Auditors.*

Table 30. Plymouth Free Public Library accounts 1897-1898.

In 1876 all of the departments of the Library were housed together in a large hall which could be serviced adequately by two Assistants and one Hallkeeper. The following year one of the Assistants was designated Assistant Librarian, and was apparently next senior to the Librarian, although it is not clear if he was actually considered to be a professional. The second Assistant was redesignated Junior Assistant, and was joined by another in that grade; a third Junior Assistant joined in 1879, making an establishment of six. It was probably the extension of accommodation in 1879, with a separate Reference Library upstairs, that caused Wright to make some staff changes which evidently did not suit everyone for it led to "the abrupt departure of my late assistant" who was replaced by promoting the senior apprentice to Chief Assistant.

This system of apprenticeship was possibly first applied in Plymouth, probably being established as early as 1876, for it is known that the Plymouth practice was to take two boys as apprentices for five years (130), and in 1880 the senior apprentice seems to have completed his apprenticeship and been promoted into a professional post. The scheme was definitely operational in 1879, and in 1880, after the question of professional training had been discussed at the Library Association Annual Conference, Wright was able to report to his Committee that:

> "The method adoped in this Library of employing youths, as apprentices, at a fair remuneration, for a term of five years, was approved; and it is gratifying to find that the same course is being adopted in other libraries." (131)

It appears that the Junior Assistant grade consisted of two categories - the two apprentices, and other non-professionals.

The staff changes in 1879 resulted in the Assistant Librarian having special responsibility for the Lending Department and the most experienced Junior Assistant for the Reference Department. In 1881 an Evening Assistant was added to the establishment, and the Hallkeeper, who had become unfit for duty through illness, was replaced in 1882 by a Caretaker/cleaner. A fourth Junior Assistant post was added in 1883, just before and probably because of another major extension of the accommodation. In 1885 the Assistant Librarian left to enter business on his own account, and was succeeded by the senior apprentice who had just completed his five years; the latter's post was not filled and the Evening Assistant was dispensed with, reducing the establishment

to six. Continuity of service now emerges very clearly, with most of the apprentices completing their five years and some remaining much longer. Robert Philp stayed five years as an apprentice and six as a professional before obtaining a post in charge of Camberwell Branch Library in London, and William Emery similarly served thirteen years before obtaining a post in charge of Kensal Branch, Chelsea. Wright was heartily congratulated by the Committee on his trainees obtaining such good posts against the considerable competition which existed.

The extension of accommodation and the establishment of new services led to increases on the staff establishment: an Attendant for each branch reading room as it was established 1892 onwards, a Newsroom Attendant 1893-4 (redesignated as second caretaker 1901-2), and a Magazine Room Attendant 1897-8. In 1901-2 the Chief Assistant's post appears to have been redesignated Sub-Librarian; the holder was R. Wellington, who joined as an apprentice in 1890-1, became Chief Assistant in 1895-6 with special responsibility for the Reference Library, Sub-Librarian 1901-2, remaining in that position until the death of W.H.K. Wright in 1915, when he became Librarian.

The growth of establishment appears to be related more to service growth and security requirements, as demonstrated, rather than to service hours, which remained very stable. The Lending Library opened 10 a.m. - 10 p.m. in 1876-7, reducing it by one hour in 1883 to 9 p.m. closing. By 1903 Wednesday had become a half day, opening 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Saturday was 10 p.m. closing, but the other days as before. The Reference Library (including Patents and Devon and Cornwall Library) opened 10 a.m. - 10 p.m., closing 2 p.m. on Wednesdays in the summer. The Newsroom opened 9 a.m. - 10 p.m., the Magazine Room and Ladies Room closing at 9.30 p.m. Branches all opened 6.30 - 9.30 p.m., plus Saturday afternoons from about 1904. The question of Sunday opening was raised in 1884, and Wright made a survey of practice in other authorities (132). A proposal for Sunday opening was put before the Library Committee at that time but it was withdrawn by its unnamed promoters; in February 1887 the Committee proposed to the Council that the Reading Rooms should be open to the public from 6 - 10 p.m. for an experimental period of one year, and that the Attendants should be paid 2s. per Sunday. The motion was lost by 21 votes to 16 and the matter does not appear to have arisen again.

The establishment in 1913-4 consisted of sixteen posts, mostly fulltime, forming a contrast with the total of four when the Library opened in 1876. The actual posts were:

Borough Librarian	1
Sub-Librarian	1
Senior Assistant	1
Assistants	2
Junior Assistants	2
Attendant, Magazine Room	1
Attendant, Devon & Cornwall Library	1
Attendants, Branch libraries	3
Caretakers	2
Extra cleaner	1
Stoker	1

7.6.3 Accommodation

The Library was inevitably faced with a continuing sequence of problems when it was decided to establish it in the old Guildhall. At first the problem was one of converting the initial allocation of non-functional rooms by an adaptation programme, but as the Library outgrew its accommodation more space was taken over until virtually the whole building had been taken over by it in 1883, and an extension was built in 1884 over part of the courtyard. Already the Librarian was agitating for a new building (133). For many years the condition of the roof gave cause for concern, with frequent leaks and disastrous effects on the books, and the interior required proper renovation which was carried out in 1890-1. The Committee were persuaded that a new building was essential and applied in 1891-2 to the Land Committee for a site adjacent to the site of the new Technical Schools, a more central situation in the expanding town. Meantime, it deferred plans for an expensive adaptation programme. Three years later the Council decided not to let the Library have the proposed new site, and in 1895 the adaptations programme went ahead; it was of a major nature, the Library being closed from May 1895 to January 1896 for the purpose. Even so, the *Annual report 1895-6* included not only a report on the adaptations, but a warning that despite the improvements the building was still not and never could be adequate; the surroundings were not conducive to study, and the growth of Greater Plymouth would require a further expansion of library services in the near future. A new heating system was installed 1897-8 and electric light in October 1899,

which perhaps improved the environmental conditions; but the strain of the continually increasing pressure of usage was telling, and in 1902-3 a note of frustration crept into the *Annual report*:

> "... Librarian and his staff do their best in circumstances that are sometimes difficult and discouraging." (134)

A bitter blow was shortly to add to their dejection.

A large number of public libraries were acquiring new buildings from about 1890 onwards through the generosity of wealthy philanthropists. Cornwall benefitted from the donations of John Passmore Edwards, a Cornishman by birth who devoted much of his fortune to that county. New public library buildings were opened by him in the period 1895 to 1900 at Camborne, Redruth, Truro, Liskeard, Bodmin, St. Ives and Launceston (135) Andrew Carnegie had already given a large number of building grants for public libraries in Great Britain. Plymouth lacked a local benefactor of this kind, and there was no chance of the Council providing the money for a new building, so the Library Committee determined to approach Andrew Carnegie (136). A joint letter dated 15 May 1903 was sent by John Shelly, Deputy Chairman of the Library Committee and W.H. K. Wright (137). In it, they pointed out: that Plymouth had a population of 112,000 which was increasing very rapidly; the Library was opened in 1876 in a building adapted to serve as a temporary home, and was still there; the penny rate produced £2,000 p.a. which was "only sufficient to meet the annual working expenses"; it had been found impossible to meet the demand for a new building out of the rates; the old building, erected 1800, had neither beauty nor antiquarian interest, was ill adapted for a library, and incapable of extension; a site for a good central library could probably be found in close proximity to the Technical Schools; and a properly equipped building would cost £20,000. The writers closed by reminding Carnegie of Plymouth's close connection with America, and the increasing number of visits to the town and Library by Americans. This letter of application was sent to Andrew Carnegie via one of his acquaintances, Francis William Fox, who wrote a brief supporting letter to accompany it (138). On 26 June Carnegie's Secretary sent a reply addressed to the Librarian:

> "Yours of 15th May received. Mr. Carnegie wishes to know if so large a population as Plymouth has is fully supplied with Branch Libraries, and whether a couple of Branch Libraries would not serve the purpose of

> reaching the people with books better than a large Central Library as proposed. Mr. Carnegie places more importance on Branch Libraries than he does on large monumental Central Buildings." (139)

At least this was encouraging in that it was not an outright rejection. The Library Committee held a special meeting to discuss the matter, and in their reply of 10 July they explained why the branch library solution was unsuitable for Plymouth.

> "The population of Plymouth is crowded into a small area, and there are not, as in some towns, suburbs, with centres of their own: all the population coming into the town for business, shopping and amusements. It has been found therefore, that the Branch Libraries, which have been opened from time to time in the outskirts have not succeeded; .... The Committee therefore, do not think, that taking all these circumstances into account, it would be desirable to build branch libraries, but that a more commodious and more central Library is greatly needed." (140)

Carnegie requested plans and a picture of the existing building, which were duly supplied, together with a verbal description of the building which is useful because none of the plans have survived.

> "The building covers an area of 3,500 feet, its length being 72 feet, and its width 50 feet.
>
> The building is closely surrounded by houses on three sides, the width of the street on the south west side being 18 feet; on the north west 22 feet; and on the north east 13 feet; on the south side is a small open space, used chiefly as a play space for children. The neighbourhood, being in the old part of the town, is very congested, and the streets, as shown in the above measurements are narrow, and likewise very noisy. The main entrance to the building is by a descent of four steps, to meet the varying levels of the surrounding streets; in fact the news room is nearly six feet below the level of the main street. As a natural consequence the rooms are defective in ventilation.
>
> The News Room is a long narrow apartment 57 feet by 24 feet, with an average height of 11 feet. It is entirely without seating accommodation, the greater part of the space being taken up by the newspaper stands.
>
> The Lending Library is above the News Room, and of similar size; about two thirds of the floor space being occupied by book stacks, the remainder for the use of the public, the Indicator and the administrative offices.
>
> The Magazine Room, which includes also the Ladies Department, gives seating accommodation for 60 persons; the wall space in this room being utilized for storing a portion of the books belonging to the Lending Library.
>
> The Reference Library on the upper floor is practically in the roof, its mean height being 14 feet, this having been

> obtained by removing the old ceiling. This room has accommodation for from 35 to 40 persons. A small room adjoining is used for storing the books and the Local, or Devon and Cornwall Department. We have no children's room, no room available for Lectures or Classes, which are sadly needed, and, as will be seen, the accommodation, both for books and readers is strained to the utmost." (141)

Carnegie's reply to this informative package was to request fresh plans with dimensions marked on them, and photographs. These were supplied on 10 August (142), and the next few weeks were passed in optimistic suspense. Hopes, however, were shattered by a somewhat curt letter from Carnegie's Secretary, dated 16 September, which merely said:

> "Dear Sir,
>
> Mr. Carnegie desires me to say in reply to your communications that he does not see the necessity of a new Library Building at Plymouth.
>
> Respectfully yours ..." (143)

Wright immediately informed Francis Fox, begging him to try to get Carnegie to reconsider, and Fox did write to Carnegie bearing "testimony to the fact that the existing Library is quite inadequate ..." (144) Wright also wrote to Carnegie expressing regret at the decision and hoping that Carnegie might one day visit Plymouth and inspect the building, for the photographs represented the building as far better and more imposing than it actually was (145). There the matter rested for a while, and depression must have weighed heavily on the Librarian and his staff.

Three years later Carnegie reversed his previous decision and offered £15,000. How did this come about? The newspaper report of the opening ceremony in 1910 includes a graphic account from one who was directly involved, the Mayor John Yeo, who had been instrumental in obtaining the grant in his previous Mayoralty in 1906. The account also includes personal sidelights on the Librarian. The Mayor in his opening speech :

> " ... wished, however, first to say that they were far-seeing men who in 1876 appointed Mr. Wright librarian. (Applause). It could not be wrong to say he was the 'right' man in the right place. (Applause). He had not read Mr. Wright's early history, but he should think possibly Mr. Wright was born in a library. (Laughter). At all events, he had never been told anything to the contrary. (Applause). Then Mr. Wright, whenever he had seen him, had been immured in a library. When

> other men went for a holiday on Saturday afternoon, Mr. Wright's change was to go to the Library for a lecture - ... - and when the summer holidays came on, Mr. Wright, true to his instincts, went away to the Library Conference, and buried himself in a library for recreation and change. (Laughter). Could they wonder that Mr. Wright had library on the brain, and had made great efforts to bring Plymouth up to its right point with regard to that particular institution. (Applause). For years Mr. Wright had been dreaming of that new building. But he (the Mayor) had now come to the point when he must say that the Mayor of Plymouth in 1906 was intimately associated with this matter, and that Mayor was now speaking to them. ... At the first library lecture of that session he found Mr. Wright downhearted and depressed. He had written many times to Mr. Carnegie, and had had no response, and he (the Mayor) administered to Mr. Wright an antidote to that depression. He said 'Cheer up Wright; let's try again! They did try again, and the result was that about the middle of June they had a communication which almost took their breath away. Mr. Carnegie proposed to send them £15,000 if they would accept it, to build the new Library." (146)

Of course it had not been quite as simple as that; the new decision by Carnegie had not been made without careful preparation by Messrs. Wright and Yeo. Their application dated 4 May 1906 was followed quickly onto Carnegie's desk by a letter of support from John Maclauchlan, Librarian of Dundee, who was acquainted with Carnegie. He excused his interference in terms of having no personal motive but the best interests of libraries at heart, and tried to convince Carnegie that his former decision had been based on a wrong appraisal:

> " ... I make bold to tell you what I know of it, based on personal experience spread over many years.
>
> I feel sure I am not using the language of exaggeration when I say that it is the worst and most unsuitable Library possessed by any important town in Great Britain. The building which it most resembles is one with which we Scots are familiar - one of those old Edinburgh 'lands' -; a very tall, narrow edifice, reached by a wretched, dark, corkscrew stair, going up and up and up. There is a small, inconvenient room on each landing, and altogether the place has a most deterring, almost repulsive aspect. ... It is now universally acknowledged that an airy, well-lighted, easily approached Library spells success .... If asked to name a Library most destitute of these alluring and essential qualities, I should at once say, 'Plymouth! That it has been successful in spite of these serious drawbacks is entirely due to the eminent personal gifts and devotion of its Librarian, ...! (147)

Perhaps that grim picture played its part in persuading Carnegie to change his mind; the files give no indication of the reason, only the

resulting offer. The letter of 22 June 1906 containing Carnegie's offer laid down his usual conditions in respect of the site and future maintenance. It also explains why £15,000 was offered instead of the £20,000 requested; clearly Carnegie had not been fully persuaded on the branch library issue.

> "Responding to yours of May 4th and previous communications in regard to new Library Building for Plymouth - in consideration of Plymouth devoting the product of its Penny Rate, amounting to £2,000 a year for support of the Library and providing a site which shall not be a burden upon the Penny Rate, Mr. Carnegie will be glad to give Fifteen Thousand Pounds Stg. for the erection of a Free Public Library Building for Plymouth.
>
> Mr. Carnegie's belief is that it is better to have a moderate-size Central Library, because a growing place like Plymouth will probably require a Branch Library or two before very long." (148)

It might be expected that such an offer would be universally welcomed and accepted; but the Mayor and Librarian were both aware that there would be opposition from some Councillors because it would mean an increase of about £500 in the Library's income and a site would have to be found at Council expense. Perhaps, too, there were still those who were hostile to the public library movement itself. Fortunately Mayor Yeo, who was ex-officio Chairman of the Library Committee, was an astute politician. He immediately enlisted the support of the Press and the Public by publishing Carnegie's letter (149) in the local newspaper and was able to write to Carnegie on 28 June that " ... your generous offer has been received by the Press and Public at large with intense satisfaction and gratitude." (150) Only then did he try to convince those who were in opposition. Carnegie's letter was put before the Council on 9 July, by which time a suitable site had been identified opposite the Technical Schools. Mayor Yeo opened the debate by giving costings which showed that the estimated annual cost to the Council of an extra £944 (£500 for the library, £235 loss of rates from houses on the site, £210 p.a. interest and sinking fund) would really be only a net £143 after offsetting new income such as the rent and rates from the old building, etc. (151) Many councillors remained unconvinced, both of the need for a new library building, and of the costings; some opposition was also expressed in terms of the loss of civic dignity in accepting charity. The matter was referred to the Special Purposes Committee, which recommended acceptance of the offer. At the next Council meeting on 13 August there was still

opposition from some diehard councillors who represented that their working class constituents were opposed to a new Library; one even forecast that a new building would be razed to the ground in ten years time by frustrated working class ratepayers! The meeting was adjourned to the next day, when the vote was taken. The result was a surprising 28 to 13 majority in favour of accepting the offer, for the Council had been thought to be more evenly divided on the issue (152) . The Town Clerk wrote the same day to Carnegie accepting the offer, and planning went ahead.

At first there was a delay before architects' plans were invited, for the Museum Committee now approached Carnegie for a grant to build a museum with the Library, but this request was refused. The Museum Committee nevertheless went ahead with a plan to finance a new building by subscriptions. Consequently the plans were drawn up for the two buildings, being adjoining but totally independent establishments. Carnegie approved the Library plans, and arranged to pay as the work progressed. On 16 October the foundation stone of the Library was laid, and Wright sent Carnegie the local press reports together with his personal "deep and heartfelt thanks for your great kindness to my native town and to the Library which has been my life-work" (153). The official opening took place on 25 October 1910, when Mayor Yeo performed the ceremony as Carnegie was unable to be present. The new imposing edifice (Fig. 33), which had the desired qualities of space, light and easy circulation, was designed by Messrs. Thornely & Rooke, built by the local firm Pethick Ltd., and was achieved for very little more than the original allocation of £15,000. The building contract, for £11,726 was modified by the addition of extra work costing another £582; the furnishings and fittings cost £1,904, and the grand total, including the architects' fees, Clerk of Works, etc., came to £15,627. Andrew Carnegie agreed to pay the extra £627 too! (154) Unfortunately no plans or photographs have survived locally or in the Carnegie Archives, and the local press accounts concentrated on what was said at the opening and who was there, rather than the features of the new building. However, it can be assumed that there was not much difference in the original layout and that which existed in 1939, with a large Women's Magazine Room and main Newsroom on the left and right of the entrance, the Adult and Children's Library in the centre, (of which the Children's

Library consisted of one bookcase in the darkest corner), and a Lecture Theatre. On the first floor there were the Reference Library, the Devon and Cornwall Library, and the Librarian's Office. In the basement was a large stack where newspaper files were stored (155).

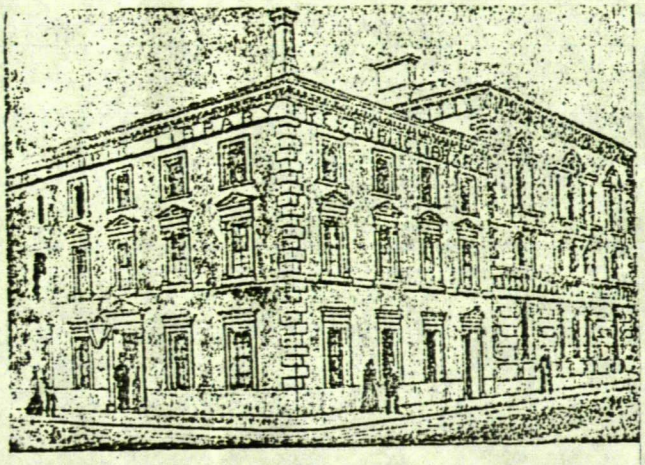
* * *

Wright continued in office for five more years in which to enjoy and exploit the new building, but died in his fortieth year of office in 1915. His hard work had not only established the Plymouth Free Public Library but had developed and consolidated it to the extent that this Library, despite its handicap for most of the period in unsuitable buildings, achieved considerable recognition from the library profession for its good work. Plymouth was honoured by being the first provincial location for the annual conference after the capital cities and university towns, in 1885; and again in 1901. Whilst there were other local libraries to visit, there seems no doubt that it was the reputation of the Public Library (plus the attractive sea and moorland surroundings) which was the main attraction to a distant corner of England.

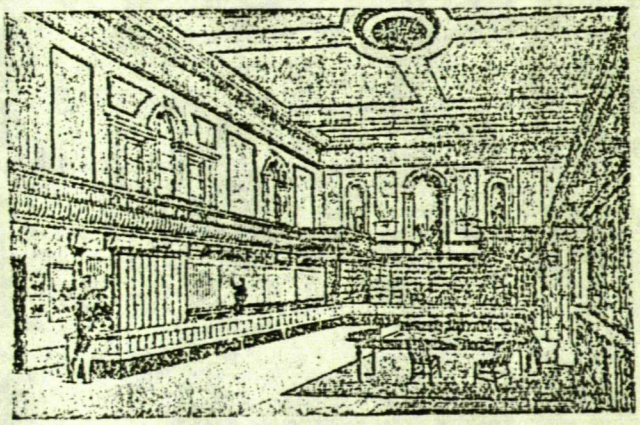
The amalgamation of the Three Towns, in which Devonport Public Library came under Wright's control, the death of W.H.K. Wright, and the effects of the 1914-18 War, dealt hard blows to the standards of service which had operated in the pre-1914 period, and it was not until after the Second World War that the library service began to regain something of the reputation it had held in the first period of its history under W. H. K. Wright.

Fig. 33 Plymouth Central Library. Carnegie building.

(The outer walls remained standing when the interior and contents were destroyed in 1941, and the post-War library has been rebuilt inside the old walls).



DEVONPORT PUBLIC LIBRARY.
(Exterior).



DEVONPORT PUBLIC LIBRARY
(Lending Department).

Fig. 34 Devonport Central Library. Exterior, and Lending Library.

7.7 DEVONPORT FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY

The Mayor of Devonport had remarked at the opening of the Plymouth Free Public Library in 1876 that the success of the Plymouth Library would encourage Devonport to follow suit, and indeed this proved to be the case. People came from Devonport, Stoke and Morice Town to use the Reference Library and the Newsrooms at Plymouth for the majority were not eligible to become members of the Lending Library (156). Interest at Devonport was almost certainly further stimulated by the imminent collapse of the Mechanics' Institute. In 1880 a requisition signed by 240 residents, burgesses and ratepayers caused the Devonport Borough Council to hold a meeting on 3 November 1880 to consider the adoption of the Acts (157). The Mayor, Mr. Graves, presided, and he claimed in his introductory speech to have suggested the establishment of a public library several months before the meeting, but as the matter was one for the ratepayers he had had to wait for them to take it up. Having in this way made clear his support in principle for the adoption of the Acts, he ended his short speech by saying that he did not want to influence the meeting!

The motion to adopt the Acts was proposed by Dr. Row, who explained that although the Act had been passed twentyfive years ago, Devonport had not been one of the hasty ones and had waited to see how others fared. The seconder took up this point more seriously, pointing to the rapid municipal development which Devonport had had to sustain in the previous decades, but suggesting that the next step in this programme was to provide a public library. Neither of the proposers saw the issue in social or moral terms, such as had been urged in the early days of public libraries elsewhere; instead it was seen simply as a natural development for which the circumstances were now ready - the latter implication being the general provision of elementary education in the last decade although this was not spelled out to the meeting. The Plymouth Borough Librarian, Mr. Wright, then described the working of the Plymouth Library and Reading Room to illustrate the kind of service they might expect from a public library.

It is curious that no reference was made at the meeting as to how it was intended that Devonport would overcome the problem of finding accommodation, the stumbling block to so many libraries; it

was explained that the full penny rate in Devonport would produce about £450 - £500, but no costing of the establishment and running of the library was reported in the newspaper accounts. It seems very much as if there had already been informal understandings reached behind the scenes that there would be a take-over of the Mechanics' Institution.

There was little opposition to the motion, and that came mainly on financial grounds. A Mr. Rundle opposed it, because the expenditure of £500 p.a. required serious consideration, although he was satisfied from the educational point of view. He drew from the experience of mechanics' institutes; there had been an outcry for them, but once they had been established they had been subverted by people other than the intended users; at Devonport, 99% of the users were middleclass, and from this precedent he believed that a free library would turn out to be for those who could afford to pay. He received little support. Several questions were asked, not on principle, but on detail, such as "Will the largest ratepayers be allowed to have the first pick of the books of the Lending Library?" The motion was carried by an overwhelming majority in the ratio 20 : 1.

The Borough Council on 9 November 1880 directed the General Purposes Committee to consider and report what steps should be taken(158). The General Purposes Committee in turn delegated the matter to a special sub-committee of eight, which included the Mayor and two members who remained in continued membership of the Free Public Library Committee for over twenty years, Messrs. Ryder and May. Almost immediately the Sub-Committee was offered the building, fittings, library and museum of the Devonport Mechanics' Institution. Probably this had been a quietly understood arrangement rather than a remarkable coincidence, but the Sub-Committee went through the official motions and decided, after due consideration, that the Devonport Mechanics' Institution building was the best adapted for the purpose of a public library. The Town Clerk was instructed to make an offer of £2,500 instead of the £3,200 asking price, and this was accepted by the Trustees of the Mechanics' Institution on 7 March 1881 (159). The freehold was purchased in 1885 from the Lord of the Manor for £1,352 (160). How did the Borough Council expect to afford this scale of expenditure, when the maximum income they could raise from the rates for the purpose was about £500? It applied successfully in March 1881 to the Treasury for permission

to borrow up to £3,000 to purchase the building etc. (161), and thereby incurred a building debt which placed an annual drain of about £200 on the Library's income until the debt was discharged in 1899. It seems unlikely that the consequences on the library service were not realised, for the past few decades had shown locally and elsewhere the need for stock to be kept up to date to maintain the interest of readers, and there must have been Council members who realised that this would not prove possible on the budget which would be imposed on the Library. One cannot help suspecting that a political urgency was partly behind the moves to establish the Library, for local government reorganisation was under consideration, leading to the 1888 Act, and the possibility of amalgamating the Three Towns was an evident threat anticipated by Devonport, which would therefore be anxious to endorse its independence in as many ways as possible, including assuming the powers of a Library Authority. Nothing of this appears on the surface, and indeed it would have been impolitic for it to be mentioned openly. The general view which was promoted in the local press by the purchasers and their supporters was that they had acquired a bargain which would place the inhabitants of Devonport at a much greater advantage than those of Plymouth. This was spelt out particularly in an account of the formal hand-over of the Mechanics' Institution on 4 June 1881 (162). In Plymouth, it reported, the building (the old Guildhall) was ill-adapted and inconvenient, and the bookstock had to be collected and was even now, after five years, only about 15,000 volumes; Devonport had from the outset both a functional library building and a nucleus of library stock. It had to be organised, and for this the experience and reputation of the Plymouth Librarian Mr. Wright would be valuable, but what Devonport now needed was the services of "a thoroughly zealous and able librarian" who must "throw his heart into the work".

On 14 April 1881 the Borough Council had resolved that the "Free Library Committee" (i.e. the special Sub-Committee of the General Purposes Committee) should be authorised as a Committee to take steps to complete the purchase of the Mechanics' Institute and open it at an early date. Tenders were submitted for the adaptations, and the lowest tender of £208 was accepted from Messrs. Patey & Sons (163). The appointment of a Librarian also received urgent attention, but the Committee found that the maximum salary they could offer, after taking into consideration the debt charges and maintenance costs, was the

comparatively low one of £80; but in addition to the salary they offered the Librarian accommodation at the Library, plus coal and gas for heating and lighting. The post was advertised in those terms, fifty applications were received, and Thomas Lakin was appointed in late July or early August (164). He was a former lieutenant in the Royal Marines, the son of a respected Devonport man (who had been a member of the first Devonport School Board in 1870), and he was married to the daughter of a Devonport painter and decorator. Perhaps his local connections played some part in his appointment, for there seems to be no evidence that he had relevant qualifications or experience for the post of Borough Librarian and he was destined not to be successful in it. In 1885 he committed suicide, and it soon emerged that he had recently been suspended from his duties by the Free Library Committee, pending an investigation into (unspecified) matters to be brought before the Town Council; on the morning of his suspension his wife left him. There had apparently been a previous history of suicide threats, and it seems clear that for a long while before his death Lakin had been a worried and unhappy man, unable to function as efficiently as his duties required, and certainly not the "zealous and able librarian" which had been specified. All of that, however, still lay in the future when, at the official opening of the Library on 6 February 1882, much of the success of the preparations was attributed to W.H.K. Wright and Mr. Lakin - named in that order, for Wright had actually planned the adaptations and organisation of the building before Lakin's appointment. The building had been completely repaired, renovated and redecorated before the Library opened (165). The old lecture hall had become the Lending and Reference Libraries, a suite of rooms on the ground floor became the reading rooms, the small hall was used for the continuing Science and Art Department classes, and the gallery housed the museum collection. The Committee, with the assistance of the Librarian, had weeded out the old and worn-out stock from the former Mechanics' Library, and reduced it to about 8,000 volumes in good condition. These were sorted and catalogued, and arranged on shelves at the east end of the hall (Fig. 34). An indicator was provided, with space for 10,000 volumes to be recorded in it. An appeal for donations had received several responses. On the day of the opening the Library must indeed have appeared impressive, and everyone was in optimistic mood. The expense, although heavy, was said not to be beyond the funds available, although it was publicly recognised that the limited revenue

would make it impossible to buy large numbers of new books.

At the annual election of committees on 9 November 1881 the Borough Council established the membership of the Free Public Library Committee as the Mayor ex-officio and eight members of the Council, and delegated to it "power to manage and conduct the business connected with the Free Public Library." (166) The lack of public representation was challenged a few months later by two members of the Committee, who proposed that its membership should be enlarged and that the extra new members should not necessarily be Council members (167). The Council split on a vote 19 to 17 against the proposal, with four abstentions. Such a narrow defeat encouraged the supporters to try again, and in November 1882 the Council extended the membership of the Committee to the Mayor and twelve Council members, and in November 1884 added two burgesses from outside the Council (168).

The early annual reports of the Devonport Free Library Committee form a contrast to those of Plymouth. They were brief, not published or printed, and consisted exclusively of the Chairman's report on behalf of the Committee, often with little statistical data. Nevertheless some indications are provided of the general development of the Library. The first year was considered a "gratifying success" (169). The Newsroom, which was open 9 a.m. to 10 p.m., was very popular with several hundred people visiting it daily, and extra newspapers and magazines would have to be supplied. The Ladies' Room, too, was "largely attended." The Lending and Reference Departments, which had opened for the issue of books on 13 February 1882, had recorded 55,842 issues, averaging 266 per day. The number of registered borrowers was 2,150, who made intensive use of the 7,151 volumes of lending stock; but it is interesting to note that in the second year only 928, less than half of these borrowers, renewed their tickets; perhaps disenchantment with the stock was already setting in. Only 545 new borrowers registered in the second year, when the report covers a full year's running from 1 November 1882 to 31 October 1883. Although the issue figures rose to 72,610, the average daily issue had actually decreased to 242 (170); but the stock had increased by over 1,400 volumes which probably helps to explain the increase of issues in the third year to over 78,000 with an improved daily average of 271 (171). From the beginning, however, books needed to be repaired, rebound or replaced, draining money from

the little bookfund available, and preventing much in the way of new purchases to revitalise the stock. The Reference Department experienced the problem as much as the Lending Library; it was not much used from the beginning because of its meagre contents of a few hundred volumes, described in 1885 as being about seven hundred volumes (172). The Newsroom appears to have been the most appreciated service, and its stock was increased in 1883 to the total of 12 daily papers, 18 weekly papers, and 19 magazines. In 1882 the Devonport and Stonehouse Medical Society transferred its library of about 700 volumes to the Library where it was kept "for the use of members of the profession" (173) In 1884 the income was £600, of which £135 was spent on books, periodicals and newspapers, and £22 on binding (174). In the same year Plymouth's income was £750 from the rates, and the expenditure on books, periodicals and binding was £227, which included a particularly low figure of £77 on new books instead of the usual £100 or more. At this point in time, therefore, the financial resources for the maintenance of the central libraries with no branches were not dramatically different, but there was a great difference in the usage statistics and trends, in which dynamic Plymouth was a success story and Devonport seemed already to be losing its grasp.

In June 1885 the occurred the unfortunate death of Thomas Lakin, the first Borough Librarian, and he was replaced in July by a former journalist, Charles R. Rowe. This was shortly before the visit to Plymouth by the Library Association Annual Conference, and Rowe supplied some information about the Devonport Public Library to John Shelly who was preparing to present a paper on the local libraries. His paper remarks of Devonport that there was no catalogue and that "the want of a catalogue must greatly hinder the usefulness of the library" (175) It probably means that there was no published catalogue, for presumably the Indicator was similar to that of Plymouth and was kept up-to-date, unless Mr. Lakin's shortcomings affected it. In its 1885-6 *Annual Report* the Committee expressed the view that the Free Library was doing good work in the town. The 1,134 registered borrowers included many young people, and the total issue of over 56,000 represented an average of over 50 per borrower or over 200 per day (which was actually a further decline in the average). There was increasing use of the reading rooms, which was bringing with it the problem of theft and mutilation of papers, against which legal action

would be taken if the offenders were caught.(176) Three years later it was reported with satisfaction that there was very good behaviour in the reading rooms due to the vigilance of the caretaker, but that most thefts were now from the Ladies' Room, due to "thoughtlessness".(177)

It appears that the keynote of the early years was steady routine without any spectacular developments, for how could much progress be made when the income remained at about £650 per annum and the building debt had to be paid off? Statistics of issues and borrowers were regularly put forward in the annual reports which were generally short and unremarkable. In 1889-90 it was reported that the long-awaited Catalogue was being prepared for publication (178) but the following year no catalogue had appeared and a drop in borrowers was reported, from 1,008 to 964 (179). When this report was read to the Council, some councillors began to be openly critical of the Library - the work was not being carried on so successfully as it might be, and they expressed the hope that the next year's report would be more satisfactory (180). It was not. Although it was reported that the *Catalogue* had been published, it was also reported that the number of borrowers had dropped further, to 876, despite the addition of a considerable number of new books to the by now badly worn and largely out of date stock. Critics on the Council asked, Had the Committee thought of branch reading rooms? Many people waited in the newsrooms to read the few papers, and more copies were needed. People went to Plymouth rather than Devonport. To all of which the Chairman replied that the Committée had no money for these things - Plymouth had "three times" the amount of income at Devonport's disposal (Plymouth's income from the rates was £1,100 of which more than £400 was spent on books, periodicals and binding so the Chairman was roughly accurate in his estimate). It seems that the initial rejoicing at Devonport's cleverness in obtaining a ready-made library was now giving way to depression over the problems it had generated. Council members commented on the 1892-3 *Report* that the Council "could not shut their eyes to the fact that at present the library was not so popular", and urged the desirability of a continuous supply of new literature. The Committee, retorted one of its members, would be quite prepared to make such provision when the funds were forthcoming!(181) The average daily issue of books had now dropped below 150, although the number of registered borrowers had only dropped by one, to 875.

Although the lack of adequate resources was a clear obstacle to any real improvement in the Library's stock, it does seem possible that a contributory factor to the lack of success and deteriorating use might have been a deficiency in the management and administration of the Library. There was little public representation on the Library Committee, which even in 1899 still only had two non-Council members, and both were clergymen so that the lay ratepayer and readers were not represented for their views to be expressed in official channels. The Committee, too, does not appear to have been very successful in its choice of early librarians. Although no specific dissatisfaction appears to have been expressed publicly with Mr. Rowe 's services as Librarian, the marked contrasting warmth of Committee approval for his successor leads one to suspect that perhaps his attitude or ability were not meeting the standard required by the Committee. He left in 1892 and was replaced in December of that year by Frederick William Hunt, who nursed the Library through a period of useful expansion and held the post until his death in 1905. Little is known about him, except that he was born in Poole in 1854, was on the composing staff of a Plymouth newspaper , and had compiled MATE's *Guide to Devonport and Plymouth* before being appointed Borough Librarian (182). He appears to have thrown himself wholeheartedly into his work, and was assisted and encouraged by the fact that the annual payments on the original library debt were due to be completed by 1900. It was probably for that reason that the Committee gave permission for the first step in popularising and expanding the Library, with the opening of Ford Branch Lending Library on 28 August 1893 (183). It was located in one of the rooms at the Boys' School by permission of the Devonport School Board, and was considered a great success, with an average of 65 issues per opening. This event apparently helped to increase the registered borrowers to 1,171, an increase of nearly 300; 400 new books were added to the general stock, and 600 were rebound. The annual report which contained Hunt's first year of work was received much more happily by the Council, and in the discussion two of the Library Committee members who had served on that Committee from 1880 made comments which seem pointedly to imply criticism of the former Librarian as well as positive approval of the new one. Mr. Ryder "spoke in very warm terms of the librarian ..." and Mr. May "spoke of the efficiency of the librarian, and said they were fortunate in having such a man." (184)

The Library maintained its steady improvement over the next couple of years, and the Committee began to devote some attention to developing the museum aspect of their responsibilities. The items which had belonged to the former Mechanics' Institute had been placed in the gallery where they were rarely visited. The collection of minerals which had been given to Devonport by the late Sir John St. Aubyn, Lord of the Manor, had been transferred to the Library building in 1883. In 1896 the Devonport School of Art moved from the ground floor hall of the Library building to the new Technical Schools, and their former room was prepared for a museum, which opened 18 May 1896. The natural history collections were enlarged rapidly, and in 1898 the South Kensington Museum loaned a collection of science and art specimens which was changed annually. The growth of the Museum was so rapid that a larger room on the second floor had to be taken over in 1899. In the latter year too the Borough Librarian was given the joint title of Curator of the Museum, and an extra boy was added to the *Library* staff to supervise the *Museum*. It appears that the expense of the Museum was met from the Library rate, but this would have been more than offset by the money released through the elimination of the long standing building loan charges.

In the Library fresh energy and ideas seem to be developing. A programme of stock expansion began with annual instead of occasional purchases of new books; 400 in 1893-4, 480 1894-5, and over 600 in 1895-6. Some of these additions were donations, and one of the formerly critical councillors contended again in 1896 that the numbers of new books being added were insufficient. The contrast with adjacent Plymouth must have appeared considerable, for Plymouth's net annual stock increase since its establishment was an average of about 2,000 volumes, while Devonport's was less than 300. Even these few volumes must often have contained material of comparatively little interest to the general reader, for example donations in 1895-6 which included 88 volumes of Patent Office publications and eleven volumes of the *International Congress of Hygiene and Demography*. The same year's *Annual Report* contains a breakdown of the stock showing its organisation and main subject holdings as in Table 31. The parallel of the classification with the Plymouth organisation of stock is obvious, and almost certainly reflects the advice of W.H.K. Wright when he was involved in the initial planning stage in 1881. The percentage analysis of stock shows no

remarkable features. Unfortunately no statistics have survived to show the intensity of use of the different classes; although Devonport is reputed to have had a low fiction issue (185) the reason does not necessarily lie in the paucity of its stock. Unfortunately the 1892 *Catalogue* does not appear to have survived, so the general quality of the stock cannot be examined either.

Table 31 . Devonport Free Public Library stock 1895-6

Class	Subject	Volumes	%
A	Theology, philosophy	290	2.3
B	Biography	1,100	8.5
C	History and travel	2,023	15.8
D	Law and logic	323	2.5
E	Science	1,179	9.2
F	Poetry and drama	436	3.4
G	Fiction	2,727	21.3
H	Miscellaneous	562	4.4
I	Magazines	1,517	11.8
J	Juvenile	940	7.3
K	Reference	1,738	13.5
		12,885	100.0

Despite the attempts to improve the lending stock and services, the most heavily used library service continued to be the newsrooms and reading rooms, which in 1896-7 attracted an estimated 117,000 visits, while about 50,000 visits were made to the Lending Library and under 20,000 to the small Reference Library (186). A series of steady improvements began to emerge. In 1896-7 the interior was redecorated so that a better environment was provided; in 1897-8 the exterior was renovated. Two extra blocks of bookcases were ordered for the Lending Library in anticipation of stock increases. Then came the eagerly awaited extinction of the building debt and the availability of about £200 for improvement and expansion purposes. A brief glimpse of the Library before the expansion programme is given in Greenwood's *Library year book 1897*, quoted overleaf. The opening hours were long - the Lending Library and Reference Library were open for sixty six hours per week, and the newsrooms for seventy eight hours per week, but this was normal for the period. The

question of Sunday opening was mentioned in the Council's discussion of the 1895-6 *Report* (187) but does not seem to have been further considered. According to Greenwood, the Library in 1897 was summarised as follows:

> "DEVONPORT, ...: Has one branch. Contains 13,300 vols., of which 12,000 are for lending, 1,000 for reference, and 300 are in the branch. Borrowers, 1,200. Staff, 4: librarian, 2 assistants, 1 caretaker. Books loaned for 7 and 10 days. Printed catalogue in dictionary form. Classification, numerical in main classes. Charging for lending, indicator; reference, application forms. ..."

The extension of service which was considered by the Committee to be most urgent was a branch library at the growing community of St. Budeaux which was about to be brought into the Borough's new boundaries. The meeting at which it was announced that the debt was extinguished was also the meeting to take action on the extension. A special sub-committee was appointed to consider the provision of a branch reading room and library at St. Budeaux, and it lost no time; it was appointed on 14 December 1898 (188) and the new branch opened on 10 February 1899 (189). It was centrally situated near the railway station, and contained both library and reading room facilities. Moreover, Devonport was at last able to boast a library "first", for it claimed that St. Budeaux was the only branch connected with any public library in Devon and Cornwall which was accessible during the whole day (although this claim seems to have related to the reading room and not the lending service). The increased duties imposed by the new branch and the Museum made it necessary for the establishment to be increased by one boy assistant; the Assistant was promoted to Chief Assistant at £1 per week, and the Second Assistant Mr. W. D. Rutter, who eventually succeeded the Librarian, became Assistant.

St. Budeaux Branch had been a particularly urgent case for political reasons, as its provision had been one of the conditions contained in the Provisional Order for amalgamation (190). It was followed by strong pressure to open branches in the older residential districts of Morice Town, Stuart Road, and Stoke, and the Library Committee approached the School Board to request that it should make schoolrooms and bookcases available for library purposes. The School Board agreed, and in the second week of March 1900 evening branches were opened at Stuart Road Board School (191) and at Morice Town

Board School (192) with stocks of 250 and 300 volumes respectively. The libraries were open two evenings per week, and the tiny stocks were to be increased as the demand arose, and changed every six months. The *British library year book 1900-1901* showed that the situation had changed considerably for the better since 1897, for Devonport now had 4 branch libraries, 15,000 volumes of stock, and 7 staff; the latter consisted of: 1 librarian £150 p.m., 1 sublibrarian £52 p.a., 1 senior assistant £31 p.a., 2 junior assistants £18 p.a., and 2 caretakers and attendants. The number of borrowers, however, had remained at 1,200.

Branch library establishment continued with the opening of a branch lending library and newsroom at Pennycross, where the infants' classroom at Montpellier School was made available nightly Mondays to Saturdays 6.30 - 9.30 p.m. Hunt observed on this occasion that Devonport now (1902) had a complete network of branches around the borough (193). Unlike Plymouth, however, the Devonport branches varied in their hours and services, as the following details from the 1903-4 *Annual report* makes clear:

Branch lending libraries	
Ford Board School	Tues. & Thurs. 7.30 - 8.45 p.m.
Morice Town Board School	Mon. & Thurs. 6.30 - 7.30 p.m.
Stuart Rd. Board School	Mon. & Thurs. 8 - 9 p.m.
St. Budeaux	Mon. 2-4, 6.30 - 8.30 p.m. Fridays, 2-4, 6.30 - 8.30 p.m.
Branch reading rooms	
St. Budeaux	daily 9.30 a.m. - 9 p.m.
Stuart Rd., Ford and Pennycross	daily 6 - 9.30 p.m.

Although the Devonport School Board was cooperating by providing accommodation and bookcases for the branch lending libraries, the tiny collections of 250 - 300 volumes were for the general reading public and not for schoolchildren. The next improvement Hunt wished to see was the introduction of school libraries.

The first reference to school libraries in connection with Devonport seems to be as the result of the Library Association Annual Conference at Leeds in 1903. Leeds was, together with Plymouth, the pioneering authority in this field and the subject of school libraries

received some attention. Hunt attended the conference, and reported back to his Committee that:

> "School libraries already exist in many towns, including Cardiff, Swansea, and Plymouth. I shall be prepared to submit a scheme for the Devonport schools whenever authorised to do so." (194)

It is a curious fact that in the same report Hunt refers to an experiment which he has already carried out from June 1903 to February 1904, and it is difficult to see how this could have been carried out without at least the knowledge and tacit approval of the Committee, despite their apparent later ignorance of it. The experiment was described as follows:

> "Scholars of the Victoria Road Council School to the number of 80 have become borrowers. The head master (Mr. Edgar Phipps) undertook to take charge of the issue of books. This school branch is extremely popular among the girls and boys. In eight months, from June 1903 to February 1904, 1,114 volumes of books were read by these School borrowers. Mr. Norman Phipps (one of the Masters) undertook the duty of School Librarian, and to him great credit is due for interesting the Pupils in the Library. The head master reports that the effect of the reading is distinctly discernible in an improved knowledge of geography, history and biography, as well as of the English language." (195)

In September 1903 Hunt attended the Library Association Conference at Leeds, in February 1904 he offered to submit a scheme, and on 15 June 1904 the Committee actually requested him to prepare a report on the formation of school libraries. His report was a lengthy one and came before the Committee on 20 July 1904. Unfortunately only an abstract survives. Hunt had reported that the headmasters of the elementary schools were willing to take charge of the libraries, and the Inspector of Education for the area was delighted with the proposal and assured him that the Board of Education would certainly approve. The Library Committee approved the scheme, and the Librarian's *Report on school libraries* was forwarded to the local Education Authority (Devonport) for its consideration and approval. At this stage things appear to have gone wrong, for the Library Committee minute is marked in the margin "Referred back by T.C. 11/8/04." No reference has been found in either the Library Committee or Education Committee minutes, and it must be concluded that the proposal came to an abrupt end. Although no reason was indicated for the referral back, it seems very likely that it was because of the increasing concern in the Borough

at the escalation in the rates, of which Education was a major cause in view of the Borough's recently acquired responsibilities under the 1902 *Education Act*. Perhaps there was an unwillingness to proceed not only on financial grounds, but also the practical difficulty of arranging a new service for schools when the reorganisation of the schools themselves was as yet undetermined.

It appears that for a period around 1900 the Council had rescinded or in some way changed the terms of reference of the Library Committee, for in November 1903 the Librarian was able to report that the Council's Standing Order had been revised, and that the powers conferred by the Public Library Acts had been restored to the Committee. The terms of reference of the Free Public Library Committee were specified as being:

> "To carry out within the Borough the powers and provisions of the 'Public Libraries Acts, 1892 to 1901', and the 'Libraries Offences Act, 1898', to keep in repair, insure and protect the Library buildings and Reading Rooms; to purchase from time to time books, manuscripts, documents, newspapers, maps, and specimens of art and science for the use of the Library, and cause the same to be repaired when necessary.
>
> To pass Accounts relating to the Library or Reading Rooms.
>
> To appoint salaried officers and servants and dismiss the same.
>
> To make rules and regulations for the safety and use of the Library and the said Reading Rooms, and for the admission of the public." (197)

The Committee for 1903-4 set up what appears to have been a customary pattern of regular sub-committees - Finance, Buildings, Book selection, Museum, Evening Branches, - and a special St. Budeaux Building Sub-Committee. The heavy Council representation on the Library Committee continued, with the Council: non-Council membership being 15 : 3 in 1900-01, and worsening to 18 : 3 by 1907-8.

On 9 November 1904 the Librarian became ill and began a long absence from work. The Chief Assistant, W. D. Rutter, who had been employed in the Library for ten years, deputised for the Librarian at the Committee meeting in March 1905 when the estimates were considered. On 19 April 1905 Hunt applied for two more months on full pay, but the Committee, although clearly sympathetic, felt unable to offer more than half pay to the end of May, when a further month was agreed. The

seriousness of Hunt's illness was evident for in June he applied for six months' sick leave without pay; the Committee agreed one month, but before that was ended, Hunt had died, following operations in Plymouth and London hospitals for tumour on the spine (198). Rutter had continued to undertake extra duties during the Librarian's illness, and was appointed Librarian and Curator with effect from 1 August 1905 at a salary of £100 p.a. (less than half of Wright's salary at Plymouth).

The incomplete reports and minutes relating to 1905 - 1914 do now show any dramatic developments, but rather some consolidation until the fact of amalgamation loomed large and the Library was left simply to tick over for the time being. The Central Library gained the benefit of electriclight from 1905 and a telephone from 1908. Stock continued to grow slowly, reaching over 17,000 lending and 6,000 reference volumes by 1911 (199). The issues ranged from 80,000 - 100,000 per annum, and no technical changes seem to have been made in library administration. A series of class catalogues began to be published in 1906; Class A Theology was the first, with Class B Biography in 1907, Class G Fiction in 1908 (at 3d. per copy), and Class C History, travel and adventure in 1909. In 1910 another Class G Fiction catalogue was printed, but no further references then occur to these lists and no copies have been found, so possibly their publication had been suspended - this would seem likely in view of the expenditure being incurred on the extended branch libraries and reading rooms. Some inexpensive service improvements and extensions were introduced. In 1906 students' tickets began to be issued, on which each borrower over 16 years old was allowed to borrow a science work in addition to a fiction book. Lecture series were held, and a lantern was purchased in 1905 to enable them to be illustrated. Despite the failure to establish a school library system, a request by the headmaster of Devonport High School was granted in 1908 for the loan of magazines and reviews, and in 1909 the same privilege was extended to the Technical Schools. In 1912 notice to quit was given to a building society which had rented a room in the Library, and the space was used to extend the Ladies Reading Room.

The most notable feature seems to have been the fluctuating situation of the branch libraries and reading rooms, which had to be monitored carefully because of their expense. The Library Committee

minutes for the years 1904 - 1914 contain many references to these services. The branch reading rooms at Ford and Pennycross were closed from 1 June - 1 October 1904, being reopened for the winter at the request of the inhabitants. The following April, 1905, a report showed that the cost was considerable and the weekly returns showed small usage - only an average issue of three books per night at Ford. They were closed again from May - October 1905. St. Budeaux branch was a brighter situation, with increased use reported September 1905, when books were being issued every day, except Wednesdays, from 2.30 - 4.30, 6.30 - 8.30 p.m. The Pennycross reading room failed to attract more users, and in December 1905 it was resolved that "having regard to the little use made of the reading room at Pennycross the same be closed." In January 1906 it was resolved to remove the furniture from the Ford reading room at Cambridge Road; this was probably because of some administrative problem, for in February a sub-committee was appointed to recommend a location for a reading room at Ford, and as a result it was reopened at 62 Station Road on 25 June 1906, at £24 p.a. rent. The reading rooms had to be in private accommodation because of the hours of access and this seemed more successful than the restrictions of the Board School accommodation. At Ford the new reading room was successful immediately and in October the same year an additional room was opened every day except Tuesdays and Thursdays when it was required for the issuing of books. The St. Budeaux rooms at 9 Morris Park Terrace proved inadequate, and in May 1906 some rooms at 10 Yeomans Terrace were leased at £20 p.a. In 1907 the Stoke branch library was moved from the Board School to rooms at 33 Wilton St., probably for the simple reason that since the 1902 *Education Act* the schools were needed for more evening activities and the rooms had become less available and less suitable for library use. The fourth branch library was opened at Peverell on 2 June 1909, at 3 Onslow Rd, and the householder was authorised to issue books for a wage of 6d. per hour (199). The reading room was open from 9 a.m. to 9.30 p.m. daily, probably by the same householder, and newspapers and magazines were supplied by a nearby newsagent. When the householder sold the house in 1910, the new owner took over the duties of branch attendant on the same terms as the previous owner. Another growing population centre in need of a branch reading room was Camels' Head, where a reading room was opened at York Rd. in 1912 and a temporary assistant issued library books from 7 - 9 p.m. on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. The Library was given notice to quit the Ford premises, but moved from 62 Station

Road to the conveniently located number 77 in the same street. Many changes were therefore taking place in the branch libraries and reading rooms in the few years prior to 1914, but at the time of the amalgamation of the Three Towns the branch situation was apparently that there was a library at Morice Town, and libraries and reading rooms at Stoke, Ford, Peverell, St. Budeaux and Camel's Head.

One of the records which surives from this period of the last few years of the Devonport Public Library contains the list of occupations of borrowers for the year 1908-9 (200). It analyses the 1,933 registered borrowers into more than 120 categories which are not always directly comparable with the Plymouth records, but it is interesting to note the most numerous categories which were, in descending order: 370 scholars, 260 housekeepers, 152 shipwrights, 130 school teachers, 125 fitters, 82 clerks, 50 pupil teachers, 44 pensioners, 43 labourers, 35 boilermakers, 34 shop assistants, 29 engineers, 27 butchers, 24 apprentices, 22 sailors and 20 soldiers. The remaining categories were represented in very small numbers. The professions were present - 6 surgeons, 1 solicitor, and 18 ministers. It is evident from these figures that the majority of users were, as might be anticipated, the Dockyard workers and their families.

As the time drew nearer to the amalgamation in 1914 there appears to have been an understandable reluctance by the Library Committee to commit itself to anything new. For example, in 1912 the question of extending or replacing the Indicator was referred to the Building Sub-Committee, but no recommendation appears to have been made. The minutes show only basic routine as the deadline came nearer, and on 14 October 1914 the Library Committee met for the last time. It closed its thirty three years' work with votes of thanks all around, and henceforth Devonport Public Library ceased to exist. It was taken over by Plymouth Public Library under the leadership of Wright, and the Central Library became Plymouth's largest branch, of which W. D. Rutter remained the site librarian.

CHAPTER EIGHT. LIBRARIES IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Most of the libraries in the schools, colleges and universities of Great Britain are of twentieth-century origin, often of post-1945 origin. There are obvious exceptions, such as the ancient universities of Oxford and Cambridge, with their central libraries and college libraries of medieval origin, and the legal deposit university libraries of Scotland; but the main emphasis in any study of academic library history normally falls upon the most recent decades of the twentieth-century, the period during which attempts have been made not only to provide libraries in schools, colleges and universities, but also to provide libraries of an acceptable standard. There is sometimes a tendency to forget that these valuable modern libraries are the end product of a continual evolution of an increasingly favourable climate. At the beginning of this chain were some early efforts to provide libraries in some forward-thinking institutions while their contemporaries took no interest; and behind them, there were those people who helped to create a teaching system in which bookbased learning was gradually introduced to replace learning by rote, eventually in turn providing a basis for the support of discovery learning which has been an invaluable incentive to the establishment of libraries in institutions engaged in education and training. Any study of the libraries of schools and colleges before 1914 is likely to reveal a very patchy situation, and this is true of the Three Towns.

The following pages describe a logical progression of libraries, starting with the part-time elementary education available through Sunday Schools; pre-1870 private and public education; post-1870 elementary and secondary education; and progressing upwards to technical education. The Royal Dockyard School and the Devonport Training School for Engineer Students have been included in this chapter because, although they were Admiralty foundations, in their early years they had much more in common with civilian technical education than with the Royal Navy or Royal Marines. The schools of the Armed Services, however, made provision for adult servicemen and were sometimes linked with Service Libraries; consequently they have been included in the special chapter 10 on the libraries of the Armed Services.

8.1 SUNDAY SCHOOL LIBRARIES

Some isolated attempts were made to form Sunday classes for children from the seventeenth-century onwards in England, but it was not until 1780 that the modern Sunday school movement really began. It was established in Gloucester by Robert Raikes, who started to found Sunday schools systematically in connection with individual congregations. The idea was taken up in London in 1784, and the movement spread rapidly. By 1789 there were over a quarter of a million scholars in attendance, and in 1803 the English Sunday School Union was established to link the schools and provide cooperative services. The aim of the movement was to instruct children in the principles of religion, which involved them in reading; but in order to achieve this aim it was necessary also to teach them to read and to provide them with literature so that they could practise reading in the intervals between the weekly classes. Some reading matter was provided in the form of Testaments, Prayer Books and Bibles which were distributed as rewards for good attendance, and primers were used in class. Libraries were often established also, although usually they were very small collections of simple literature of a religious and general nature, supplied for token payments by the Sunday School Union, the Religious Tract Society, the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, etc. This educational work of the Sunday schools was overtaken by the elementary education system introduced in the last decades of the nineteenth-century, and the need for libraries largely vanished with it, particularly as the public library movement spread rapidly in response to the incentive of the introduction of education for all.

The first Sunday school in Plymouth was established in 1787(1) and the first one in Devonport not until 1806 (2), but the movement seems to have flourished more extensively in Devonport after its late start, for in 1833 Devonport had ten Sunday schools and 2,395 pupils compared with Plymouth's five Sunday schools and 117 pupils (3). At Plymouth, two of the Sunday schools had libraries attached (one a Baptist school and one not specified), while Devonport had seven libraries (one Anglican, three Wesleyan Methodist, and three others). Stonehouse had five Sunday schools and 386 pupils, but no libraries were reported. The lack of references to libraries does not necessarily mean that libraries were not present in Stonehouse, but as it was then a matter of

local pride to be able to respond positively to such surveys, it seems very likely that libraries would have been included had they existed. The Census of 1851 included educational returns which show that the number of Sunday schools at Plymouth had grown to 29, with a total of over 4,500 pupils, which was almost equal to the number of children at day school in the borough. At Devonport there were 22 Sunday schools and over 3,600 pupils. With these numbers of schools in existence it is not surprising to find local Sunday school unions being formed - Devonport & Stonehouse Sunday School Union in 1850 and the Church Sunday School Union in 1866 (4). Unfortunately, the 1851 Census did not provide any information about the numbers and sizes of the Sunday school libraries, nor are there many references in local sources; but there are two sets of Sunday school archives from which some details of the administration of the schools and libraries emerge, and these are likely to have been typical of the others.

One of the earliest Sunday schools and Sunday school libraries in the Three Towns was the NEW TABERNACLE SUNDAY SCHOOL, one of the ancestors of the modern Sherwell Congregational Church. It was established on 17 May 1813 (5) and immediately set about obtaining suitable materials for teaching children to read. The money was provided by the subscribers who contributed a minimum of 4d. per month, and who were thereby entitled to recommend children to be admitted to receive the free tuition, which ranged from the alphabet class to the Bible Class (6). The first books which were ordered were one hundred copies each of the *"First spelling book"* and *"Second spelling book"*, plus multiple copies of catechisms, all of which were obtained from London (7) and probably from the cheap literature publishers. In 1817 further supplies of these teaching materials were obtained (8) and by this time reward books were being purchased locally from Messrs. Derry & Sons (9). In 1818 it was resolved that each Class should have a separate set of reading books which must be "marked and numbered according to the class to which they belong", and each set was to be kept in a separate place under the charge of the teacher (10). This made it necessary to find suitable storage accommodation, and it was resolved to approach the "Proprietors of the Sunday School Library" about the transfer of "the bookcase" to the Sunday School (11). It is not clear whether this was an empty bookcase, or a request for the transfer of the Library's only bookcase which presumably had spare

shelves on which the class sets of books could be stored. The Sunday School Library had been established by 2 October 1816, on which date it was resolved that the Rules of the Library should be presented to the Sunday School Committee in order to "signify that there was such a thing established in the School" (12). Unfortunately no copy of the rules seems to have survived, and the minutes do not reveal any more information about the Library. Certainly the existence of separate bodies responsible for the Library and the Sunday School would not suggest easy access to the contents of the library bookcase at this early date.

Occasional references to Sunday schools and libraries appear in local directories for the Three Towns in the nineteenth-century. In 1830 two ladies were named as the Treasurer and Secretary of ST. JOHN'S CHAPEL SUNDAY SCHOOL LENDING LIBRARY at Devonport (13). There was a Sunday School Library at Norley St. Unitarian Church in about 1872 (14), but this seems to have been the New Tabernacle Sunday School Library under another name, for the history of the modern Sherwell Congregational Church is rather complicated but was connected with Norley St. Unitarian Church. There was a WESLEY SUNDAY SCHOOL LIBRARY in Plymouth which had a sufficiently large collection of books to print a catalogue, for there is a reference to such a publication (undated and not further specified) being in the stock of the Local Department of the Plymouth Free Public Library in 1892 (15).

> In 1885 Shelly noted in his paper on Plymouth libraries that: "In connection with most of the Sunday Schools in the three towns, there are libraries consisting chiefly of books for children, ..." (16)

The size of these libraries is unlikely to have exceeded a few hundred volumes at best. The total library stock of the Bible Christian Sunday Schools in the Devonport District in 1888 was 2,187 volumes, to serve a user community of 5,630 scholars and 1,240 teachers (17). This suggests a rough scale of one volume for every two or three scholars, so that it was by no means easy for a scholar to borrow when he wanted even if the stock contained literature that he was genuinely interested in reading, which must be somewhat doubtful.

An account book has survived from the records of the PEMBROKE ST. BAPTIST SUNDAY SCHOOL, which shows the income and expenditure on the Library from 1874 onwards (18), when the need for Sunday school libraries was probably already beginning to decline. The income for most years shows that less than £1 per annum was received from the sale of periodicals and unwanted books, and occasionally the sale of library cards. The latter income did not exceed 1s. 6d. per annum, but the reference to the sale of library cards suggests that perhaps a small entrance fee was charged; if so, the number of users was very small. Occasionally a shilling or two seems to have been donated to the funds by a well wisher. In addition, the expenditure columns show that in 1876, 1878 and 1881 grants of thirty shillings or two pounds were made to the Library, probably from the General Fund. Apart from the expenditure of those grants there was very little library expenditure; in 1878 eight shillings were spent on periodicals; in 1880 one hundred library cards were purchased for 1s. 11d.; in 1882 a book was purchased at 1s. 6d. for the "Teachers Library" (the only reference to its existence); in December 1884 4s. was spent on books for the Library, and in 1885 £1.15s. was paid to the Sunday School Union for library books. These meagre sums on library books finally petered out in 1910 when £1 was spent on books for the Library and no other references occur thereafter. The last reference to any profit on the sale of periodicals appears in the year 1915-6. The account book covered the period up to 1921, so it must be concluded from this evidence that the Library received very little maintenance after about 1885, and probably decayed over the next few years, with its final disappearance in the early years of World War I. This would be logical both in the general context of Sunday school libraries and in the local context, for the public libraries of Plymouth and Devonport were supplying literature for young people free of charge from 1876 and 1882 respectively, and by 1890 there was a network of school libraries in Plymouth. The educational purpose of the Sunday school libraries had disappeared, and it was unlikely that any residual stocks of old-fashioned, mainly religious literature would have much appeal to the scholars. Yet there were residual libraries at least in 1901, when W.H.K. Wright informed the visiting Library Association Conference that most of the Sunday schools of the town had libraries consisting chiefly of books for children (19).

8.2 EARLY DAY SCHOOL LIBRARIES, UNTIL 1870.

The early day schools of the Three Towns can be grouped conveniently according to their academic aspirations. There were schools which concentrated on providing a full classicial and mathematical education suitable for boys whose careers were likely to be amongst the professions or at officer level in the Services, or whose parents simply wished their sons to be well educated. There were other private schools which provided a basic English education and optional extra subjects such as French, music, drawing, etc., viz. socially oriented schools. Finally, there were schools which gave a minimal English education to the children of parents who could not afford private education. Inevitably the expectation of school libraries must be highest among schools of the first group, and lowest in the last group, and this is borne out from the surviving evidence.

The oldest school was PLYMOUTH CORPORATION GRAMMAR SCHOOL, which received a bequest of £10 in 1669 for the establishment of a library. This has already been examined in Chapter 3, where it was also shown that although the school had a "small library" in the sense of "library room" in the mid nineteenth-century and it might be supposed that it did have a library for much of its history, no proof survives. Its early nineteenth-century competitor, however, the PLYMOUTH SUBSCRIPTION CLASSICAL AND MATHEMATICAL SCHOOL which opened in 1822, immediately adopted the "Eton plan" for developing library resources. Each boy, on entering the school, paid 10s. 6d. towards a school library, and another 10s. 6d. after three years. In that way "a valuable library" was already being formed in 1825 (20). The DEVONPORT CLASSICAL AND MATHEMATICAL SCHOOL which opened in 1821 probably had a similar system, although the only details which survive shows that there were Librarians. The names suggest that the Librarians must have been masters, for several have senior naval rank:

1825 Capt. Sanders, R.N., and Lieut. G. Somerville (21);
1828 Capt. Sanders, R.N., and Lieut. G. Somerville (22);
1830 Lieut. G. Somerville and J.W. Collin (23);
1837 Capt. Sanders, R.N., and Mr. Procter (24);
1843 R.M. Oliver and G. Procter (25).

The extent to which libraries were essential to the students

undergoing a classical and mathematical course was probably still dependent to a large extent in the nineteenth-century on the attitude of the masters and the methods they employed. Rote-learning was a standard teaching method, and discovery learning was a long way in the future as a teaching method to be encouraged. The course which was studied in the classical schools was probably similar to the following one advertised in 1836, from which it can be inferred that boys would need access to a range of textbooks, but would not necessarily be expected to read and explore outside them in a library.

> "Latin. Eton grammar, Delectus, Ovid, Caesar, Virgil, Sallust, Cicero de Officiis, Cicero's Orations, Terence, Plautus, Livy, etc.
>
> Greek. Valpy's Grammar, Delectus, Testament, Lucian, Zenophon, Homer, Herodotus, Euripides, Sophocles, etc.
>
> Mathematics. Joyce's Arithmetic, Simson's Euclid, Bridge's Algebra, Bland's Algebraic problems.
>
> General science, history etc. Joyce's Scientific works, Pinnock's Histories, ancient and modern, Murray's Grammar, Murray's Exercises, Pinnock's Geography, ancient, sacred and modern." (26)

The only reference to a library which has been discovered among schools which might appear to be in the second group, less academically strenuous and perhaps more of a socially oriented education, is an advertisement by J. Milton in 1814. One of the attractions which he featured was:

> "An extensive School Library is kept, consisting of such books as are strictly of a moral tendency, and calculated to inspire a love for learning." (27)

Perhaps this was not a common feature among the private academies for young gentlemen at the period, for Mr. Milton's advertisement is the only one of many private school advertisements which had been found in the local press to mention a library.

The third group of schools are those which were concerned with providing a basic literacy, which was intended at the beginning of the century to enable them to read the *Bible* and to enhance their moral welfare rather than to inculcate a love of learning; it only extended to about three years of education and an ability to read with a greater - or, more likely, lesser - degree of fluency. Bibles were given as prizes or school-leaving presents, but normally there were no school libraries in the old endowed schools. One exception

appears to have been the Benevolent Institution, a charity school which had been established in 1785 by the nonconformists; in 1833 this school was recorded in the Education Enquiry together with a note that it had "a library attached" (27); nothing more has been discovered about this library, which might have consisted of nothing more than a collection of cheap religious literature donated by a local branch of one of the main tract societies.

The monitorial system of the British and National Schools was noted for its cheapness, and the main teaching system seems to have been based on learning by rote. It would have been inconsistent with their early philosophy and practice to make even a generous provision of textbooks, let alone a library. It was not until the middle of the century that the monitorial system began to be displaced by more professional teaching methods and the wider use of textbooks, which gradually led to a recognition of the need for something more, a groping towards discovery learning and the beginning of school libraries in support of the learning process. The schools in the Three Towns must have become aware of the more book conscious climate, particularly those which participated in the Government grant scheme. Government grants were first introduced in 1833, and were initially confined to building grants but soon widened to include other needs of the schools. Grants were awarded only on condition that the schools became subject to the Government Inspectors of Education, and through the system which began to develop there began to be central encouragement for the improvement of standards of education. In 1847-8 the Committee of Privy Council on Education resolved:

> "That it is expedient to encourage by grants the introduction into elementary schools, of the most approved lesson-books and maps for the use of the scholars, and of textbooks for the teachers and pupil-teachers." (28)

This grant was dependent upon the schools providing two-thirds of the cost themselves, but nevertheless it was an important step towards increasing book consciousness. Libraries were probably still not common, but were receiving some minor encouragement, for in 1851 it was further specified that:

> "Books *for the school library* or for prizes may be included in the application for books and maps at reduced prices, but no pecuniary grant will be made on these accounts." (29)

This referred to the lists of books, suitable for scholars, teachers

and pupil-teachers, which were available at discounts of more than 40% from the Council. "Book learning" began to be associated with the elementary schools and began to be widely appreciated. In 1858-9 the Committee of Council on Education reported:

> "There is a growing feeling amongst the labouring classes in favour of education, and the parents, as a body, are most anxious that the children should have some amount of 'booklearning' ." (30)

Several schools in the Three Towns applied for Government grants and became subject to inspection and eligible to apply for discounted books. The earliest school to receive Government aid was Charles Parish School in 1847, followed over the next few years by Charles Church 1850, Holy Trinity 1855, St. Anne's, St. Peter's, and St. James's, which were Anglican schools; one of the oldest endowed schools, the Greycoat School, also received a grant; and the private Roman Catholic School of St. Boniface. There was no pressure on the schools to establish school libraries, nor does there seem to be any direct evidence that they did so, but the important point is that local schools were sharing in the national efforts to improve the standards of elementary education, including the spreading consciousness of books not only as textbooks but also as support material in school libraries. All of this must have assisted in forming a suitable climate in which it became possible to establish an early system of school libraries in Plymouth later in the century, for the success of the system depended very much on the attitude of the teachers and their willingness to take an active role in the scheme.

8.3 PLYMOUTH SCHOOL LIBRARY SERVICE, 1887 - 1914

Plymouth played an important part in the early history of school libraries in England, for two reasons; first, the Borough Librarian of Plymouth was one of the first to advocate the use of the Board Schools by public libraries, and secondly, Plymouth was one of the first authorities to establish a school library service.

W. H. K. Wright was appointed Borough Librarian of the newly established Plymouth Free Public Library in 1876, and it seems probable that he was already aware at that time of the potential importance of the Board Schools as local centres for the public library. This became explicit in his paper to the Library Association in 1877, in which he considered the best means of promoting the free library movement. He did not then refer specifically to school libraries, but recognised the potential usefulness of the Board Schools as branch or general libraries. He was well aware of the pioneering work being done at Leeds, for he referred to the experience of "my friend, Mr. James Yates, of the Leeds Libraries, where the Board Schools have been thus used for some time" (31). Clearly the use of libraries by schoolchildren was a matter which occupied much of his attention, for he went on to say in the same paper:

> "A few days since I witnessed several thousands of children from our Board Schools assembled to receive prizes for regular and punctual attendance. The prizes selected were books. Here, thought I, were the evidences of what must be in the future. The seed was being sown; pure Literature was being disseminated, and the taste for it must spread;..." (32)

Juvenile literature had been provided in the Central Library from the beginning, but Wright was aware of some of the problems created by it, and in 1879 in another paper to the Library Association Conference he presented more specific ideas on the cooperation between School Boards and Library Authorities. He envisaged Board Schools as the location for evening reading rooms with a small lending library attached, and within that arrangement there should be a school library. First, however, he outlines the problem:

> "It is that some mutual understanding or relationship between librarians and public school teachers should be brought about, with a view to exercising a reasonable amount of supervision over the reading of the children connected with both establishments. ... a large proportion of the borrowers are scholars, ... their reading is generally of the most aimless and desultory character."

Parents, he believed, had the duty to exercise influence on the child's reading but rarely did so, throwing the responsibility on the teachers and librarian. Therefore, he advocated, there should be special provision in connection with every public library for young people.

> "Reducing my ideas into something of a practical character, my proposition is as follows:-
>
> That in connexion with each district library, such as that I have proposed, there should be a small collection of books approved by both library and school authorities for the use of the children attending that school; and that those children should not be allowed the run of the central or general library, except at the special request of parents or teachers." (33)

It was probably on this model that in 1881 Wright submitted proposals for branch libraries in Plymouth to his Committee, but the latter felt that the time was not opportune (34). Meantime, Wright kept abreast of developments in Leeds, which had established branch libraries in Board Schools in 1877 and school libraries in 1884 (35), and it must have been a disappointment to him that his Committee would not agree to his proposals for school libraries in Board Schools which would have resulted in Plymouth being either the first, or joint first with Leeds, to operate school libraries. In the *Annual report for 1884* Wright had written:

> "It will be observed ... how large a proportion of our borrowers are young people and school children, for whom the provision of healthy literature is a great boon. I wish this feature of our work could be more fully developed, and that by an arrangement with the managers of our Board Schools a regular system of loans for the children might be organised. I commend the matter to members of the School Board, ..." (36)

As the report was published and circulated among the Borough Council, Wright could be certain that his diplomatically worded advice would reach members of the School Board even if his Committee would not take official action on the matter. However, in 1887, after considerable discussion and prolonged negotiation, Wright succeeded in obtaining the approval of both the Library Committee and the School Board for the experimental establishment of school libraries which would be for the exclusive use of the schoolchildren. (The issue of branch libraries and reading rooms for general use being located in Board Schools had become a separate one). In 1887 Wright reported that very satisfactory conditions had been arranged for the experiment, and that over 1,000 volumes had been selected for distribution among the eleven

Board Schools. The Free Library Committee and the School Board each had clear cut commitments, as follows:

The Free Library Committee undertook:

"(a) to supply to each school a Library consisting of not less than 100 carefully selected books from the present stock of the Library, to be supplemented from time to time, as circumstances permit. Such Libraries to remain in circulation, by way of experiment, for a period of not longer than six months.

(b) to take the sole responsibility for, and to make good, any loss, damage, or injury to the books which may occur in the respective schools after every effort has been made on the part of the Principal Teacher to recover the same."

The School Board undertook:

"(a) to provide for each of the boys' and girls' schools sufficient cupboards or bookcases for the reception of the books which may be lent by the Free Library Committee, and to provide the necessary books, labels, etc., which may be required for the purpose.

(b) to arrange that the books are properly catalogued, issued, collected, exchanged, and registered in accordance with the regulations which may be determined on between the Library Committee and the School Management Committee of the Board from time to time.

(c) to appoint a Committee, who shall (in conference with the Principal Teachers) select the books for the respective schools and exercise a general supervision over the Libraries." (37)

The scheme came into operation at the beginning of 1888, and in October Wright was able to report that "the new departure has given thorough satisfaction" (38). The books were in good condition, very few were missing, and they were much appreciated by the children. The teachers were taking a warm interest and encouraging the children to used the books carefully. Having observed the experiment carefully, and having consulted all of the head teachers, Wright concluded that the experiment had been successful and should be extended. The School Board and the Free Library Committee agreed to continue with the scheme, and added a twelfth school to the list.

The actual quantity of library books which had been provided for the schools was 1,719 volumes, which had been drawn mainly from Class J, Juvenile literature, in the Central Library; Class J received

a strong reinforcement of nearly 1,000 volumes in 1888-9, now that the school library service had been officially approved. The number of young borrowers and juvenile issues declined in the Central Library as children in the selected schools made use of the tiny new libraries. The distribution of children's books was spread over the whole town, and children were saved long journeys to the Central Library, where the pressure on staff at certain hours was greatly lessened. Not only did the children read the school library books, but as an added benefit the books were often read by other members of the family also. Even the closure of school libraries for six months in 1889-90, because of a fever epidemic, did not affect the growth of the new service adversely. A further school was added to the list in that year, and in 1890-1 it was reported that the school libraries had given entire satisfaction, with several schools applying for additional grants of books. The strain on Class J was heavy, and in 1891-2 a new Class S was established for the school library stock; over the next couple of years books were transferred into it from Class J and other suitable literature from other classes. This reduced the administrative record burden at the Central Library.

The scheme progressed smoothly for the next few years, and a favourable report appeared in the School Board *Report* published in 1895:

> "Very good use continues to be made of the books on loan at the Schools from the Free Public LIbrary, which in many cases have been useful in enabling the teachers to refer the children to specific books further illustrating the subjects taught.
>
> Fifteen small Libraries have been granted from the Central Library, containing upwards of 3,000 books. Seeing that Her Majesty's Inspector is directed to enquire as to what use is made of the School Lending Library, and that its existence has been referred to as one of the indications of 'a good school', the Library Committee of the town may be congratulated in rendering some assistance in earning School Grants in addition to realizing the usual objects which they have in view." (39)

Gradually the scheme was extended; in 1895-6 a voluntary school, St. Peters National School, was granted a school library of 200 volumes, and a boundary extension of the Borough brought the schools of Compton and Laira into the scheme in 1896-7. The *Education Act 1902* resulted in the transfer of many private elementary schools into the hands of

the new Local Education Authority. The strain on the school library service is evident from the simple fact that in 1902-3 there were 14 schools (19 departments) being supplied, but in 1903-4 there were 28 schools (43 departments) requiring school libraries. The stock of 3,590 volumes in 1902-3 was insufficient, and although some extra stock was purchased it was impossible to supply all of the new schools and department immediately. Table 32 shows the pattern of distribution. There was a drastic reduction in the sizes of the libraries in the older schools, many of the new schools were allocated a quota well below the 100 which had been the originally agreed minimum, and that still left 18 departments without supplies. The ostensible reason given in the reports was that book cupboards had not been supplied in the latter schools, but in 1904-5 there were still ten departments without books and the Librarian's *Report* revealed that more than 1,000 more volumes were still needed to supply them (40). By 1907, however, it appears that all of the 43 departments had received their appropriate quota. There were various changes in the school departments from 1903 onwards as a result of reorganisation by the new Local Education Authority, but the picture remained broadly the same until 1914. The regulations for the management of school libraries were printed in 1906 (41), and form an explicit statement of the operation of the libraries; probably the arrangements they describe were the ones which had been in operation for many years, and they seem to have continued until at least 1914. These regulations are quoted in full in Table 33 .

The success of the school library service is indicated by the growth and volume of issues, and the percentage they formed of the whole issue. From 1887 to 1892 the school library issues are included in the relevant subject classes, particularly Class J, Juvenile literature, which rose from 21,702 (14.7%) in 1887 (the year before the scheme began), to over 84,000 (33.4%) in 1888-9 (the first fifteen months), and over 104,000 (45%) in 1890-1 (the first regular year). From 1892-3 the school library stock was separated into Class S, for which issues were recorded separately; these were over 150,000 (51.3%) in 1893-4, and increased further to over 180,000 (50%) in 1901-2. The issues then remained at about the same total figure, but declined gradually to about 40% of the total issues of the Free Library by 1913-4. A variety of reasons might explain this; for example, the children of the new school libraries of 1888 had become adults who were probably

Table 32 The chronological development of the Plymouth School Library Service and library allocations

		1888/9	1892/3	1896/7	1902/3	1903/4	1913/4
King St.	Boys	150	200	200	200	100	92
Mount St.	Boys	124	200	200	200	100	120
	Girls	120	120	120	120	100	100
Oxford St.	Boys			200	200	100	
	Girls	200	200				
Palace Court	Boys	150	150	150	150	100	100
	Girls	125	150	150	140	100	100
Sutton Rd.	Mixed					100	100
	Girls	100	100	100	100		
Treville St.	Boys	150	150	150	150	100	100
Union St.	Boys	200	250	250	250	100	100
	Girls	150	150	150	150	120	120
Wolsdon St.	Girls	130	100	100	100	100	100
Cattedown	Boys		100	100		100	100
	Girls		100	100	100		
	Mixed	120	120	120	200	100	100
Public School			500	500	300	200	
Compton National	Mixed			200	230	100	100
Laira	Boys			100	100	100	100
	Girls			100	100	100	100
North Road	Girls			300	300	100	100
Regent St. Higher Grade					500	500	450
St. Peter's	Boys			125	100	120	120
	Girls			100	100	100	80
Charles	Boys					50	100
	Girls					50*	50
Greycoat	Boys					50*	100
	Girls					100	100
Holy Cross	Boys					100*	50
Holy Trinity	Boys					60*	50
	Girls					60*	
Hyde Park Road	Boys					150*	150
	Girls					150*	120
Prince Rock	Boys						100
	Girls						150
St. Andrew's	Boys					75*	75
	Girls					75*	50
St. Boniface	Boys					50*	50
St. Catherine's	Boys					25*	25
	Girls					25*	25
St. John's	Boys					120*	120
	Girls					120*	120
Salisbury Rd.	Boys					100	
	Girls					100*	
	Mixed						100
Technical Schools	Boys						76
Christ Church	Boys					50*	
Household of Faith	Girls					50*	
St. James	Boys					100*	
	Girls					100*	

* Not supplied until later.

making heavier use of the Central Library and the new branch libraries; the reduction in the size of school libraries because of the overall increase in the number of schools taking part in the scheme also must have thrown some more pressure on the Central Library from the children who were not satisfied with or who had exhausted their school stocks. One thing is certain, that the intensive use of the small school library stock of not more than 4,000 volumes resulted in very heavy wear and tear. As early as 1904-5 it was being reported that the maintenance of this section of the stock was making heavy inroads into the bookfund of the Borough Library, and it was hoped that the Education Committee might see its way clear to make a grant (42), but this does not seem to have happened and the Librarian again drew attention to the financial problem in 1913-4, requesting greater care to be taken of the books.

It is not difficult to see in retrospect that the standard of satisfaction with the school libraries seems to have peaked about 1901-2, just before the resources became seriously overstretched by the numbers of schools and scholars which were the responsibility of the new Local Education Authority in 1902. The scale of the service, with the heavy maintenance costs, was causing concern in the Borough of Plymouth in 1914. When the amalgamation of the Three Towns took place, the public library service immediately had the problem to face that the schools of Devonport and Stonehouse had no school library service, and there needed to be some equalisation of services throughout the new County Borough of Plymouth. It seems that this problem, compounded by the economies imposed through the World War I, and the death of W.H.K. Wright in 1915, led to the suspension of the school library service which had proved to be one of the earliest and most celebrated in the country.

Table 33 Regulations for Plymouth School Libraries in 1906

"The following regulations are in force for the management of School Libraries:-

(a) The Principal Teachers are held responsible for the proper cataloguing, issuing, collecting, and exchanging of the books for their respective departments, but may delegate the work of registration, etc., to an Assistant Teacher, or arrange for the work to be done in rotation by all the Assistants in the School.

(b) On the receipt, return, or transfer of books from the Free Library, each book shall be entered on the School Catalogue in the Form determined.

(c) A record shall be kept in the "Lending Book" of the names and addresses of the children making use of the Library, and the date and number of each book taken out or returned. Only one work at a time shall be taken by the same child.

(d) The whole of the children whose names appear on the Admission Register of the Department, and who are working in or above Standard III, shall be entitled to the benefit of the Library. The Principal Teacher may, however, have the right of withholding books from those who are known to have wilfully or carelessly damaged or injured any of the books taken out of the said Libraries.

(e) A specified time in each week, most convenient to each particular School, shall be fixed for the issue and collection of books, which shall apply to all children referred to in Section D, and such times shall be inserted on the labels affixed to the books, and shall be exhibited on a card hung on the walls of the School-room.

(f) A list or catalogue of the books in the School, lent by the Library Committee, shall be hung in the School where it can easily be seen and referred to by the children.

(g) Each set of books at certain periods shall be returned direct to the Free Library; books worn out or otherwise unfit for circulation being replaced by new copies or other works when deemed desirable. Any School Library may, however, be retained for a further term, if so desired by the Principal Teachers.

(h) All books in circulation, with the remaining portion of the School Library not in circulation, shall be collected together at the School for inspection twice in each year, immediately before the Summer and Winter holidays, or at such times as may be fixed by the Librarian.

(i) The General Rules of the Free Library Committee shall, as far as applicable, be observed, and the Teachers shall make such periodical returns as the Librarian may require".

Plymouth Free Public Libraries

Report 1905/6, 20.

8.4 OTHER LIBRARIES IN EDUCATION 1870 - 1914.

With the exception of the foregoing information on the Plymouth School Library Service and the following sections on three individual special institutions, the evidence about libraries is very sparse for the period 1870 to 1914. To a large extent, this is probably to be explained in terms of this period being comparatively early for school and college libraries, and consequently the normal expectation ought to be one of small, occasional libraries, rather than large, omnipresent libraries in educational establishments. Another factor is the incompleteness of the local records in which some traces of libraries might have been found. The net result is a meagre one.

The libraries which were described in the Plymouth School Library Service were primarily the libraries of schools concerned with public elementary education, first the Board Schools, and then some of the voluntary schools, until the 1902 *Education Act* brought all but the totally independent schools within the Local Education Authority of Plymouth. An attempt was made, unsuccessfully, at Devonport, but the Devonport Education Committee or the Council itself would not allow the scheme to go forward, probably on financial grounds. And no evidence has been found to suggest that the few schools at Stonehouse had any libraries. This does not mean that the elementary schools were literally without any book collections besides their textbooks, but it does point to any which might have existed being too insignificant to be noticed. Perhaps it is relevant to notice that Wright himself mentioned in 1901 that some of the Board Schools in Plymouth had small collections of books of an elementary character besides the books lent from the Free Library, and this could also have held true in Devonport and Stonehouse. However, it is quite likely that Wright had in mind collections which were connected not with elementary schools but with the higher grade school and technical schools, of which some slight evidence remains.

A higher grade school had been established at Mount St. in Plymouth for those children who had passed Standard 4, and a new building was planned for it in Regent St., which included special rooms as well as classroom, one of the designated special rooms being a Library (44). The Regent St. Higher Grade School was opened in

April 1897, and the Plymouth Free Library Committee added it to the list of schools it supplied with school libraries. In 1900, on the third anniversary of the school's opening, the teachers and parents presented a "library of about 100 specially selected volumes" to the Girls Department, "and this is being added to from time to time" (45). It is also possible that Wright had in mind collections funded by the School Board, which did not, however, alleviate the Free Public Library's problem of maintenance mentioned in the last section. In the Appendix to the Plymouth School Board *Report* covering 1895 to 1898, there are "Provisions of the Scheme correlating Science and Art teaching in the Schools of the Board", in which it is stated:

> "As to Science
>
> 3. That Text Books and Readers to form small Reference Libraries be provided for each Senior Department, containing Murche's, Blackie's, and Paul Bert's books; such Libraries to be added to from time to time." (46)

It is very likely that the other higher grade schools in the public education sector and the high schools in the private sector had some small libraries similar to the Plymouth provision, but the records have not yielded any specific evidence either on libraries or on book expenditure.

Both Plymouth and Devonport have long histories of technical education, starting with the mechanics' institutes. Stonehouse, too, had some technical education during the brief life-span of its own Mechanics' Institute, but apart from that venture the people of Stonehouse made use of the Devonport and Plymouth facilities.

At Devonport, the Mechanics' Institute was the location for not only its own classes but also the School of Art which was opened there in 1859, providing classes in technical drawing for Dockyard apprentices as well as ordinary classes in various kinds of painting and drawing. The Mechanics' Institute was the only centre in Devon and Cornwall for the examinations of the Society of Arts, and many of its own members were amongst the successful candidates. The first science classes under the South Kensington scheme were also held in the Institute in 1868, but later moved to a Board School. It became common practice for evening classes to be held in the dayschools A special early development at Devonport was the establishment of the

Dockyard School by the Admiralty in 1844, and this will be described in section 8.5.

In Plymouth,there were occasional art classes in the 1850s and 1860s, and a Plymouth School of Art in Princess Square which remained as a separate entity even when the Plymouth Technical School opened in 1894 (47). It was a local man, Dr. Merrifield, who took the Science and Art Department's examinations for teachers' certificates in 1860, and became the first teacher of Science under that Department's scheme south of the Thames (48). He became the headmaster of the Plymouth Navigation School which was established in 1862; this school provided education ranging from the boys preparing for a career at sea to the officers studying for their Board of Trade Master's Certificate. The Plymouth School of Science was established in 1865, and classes were held in nearly all of the twenty-three subjects in the *Directory* of the Science and Art Department; the School was one of the largest of its kind in the country.

No traces of libraries have been discovered in connection with these early classes of applied science and art, and the members were probably forced to depend upon such library provision as they could find in the Mechanics' Institutes Libraries and later the public libraries.

In Plymouth attempts were made as early as 1868 to obtain a central technical school building in which the scattered art and sciences classes could be held, and a subscription list was opened in 1870, with such poor results that nothing more was done until the Queen's Jubilee year in 1887. A town meeting declared in favour of a technical school as an appropriate jubilee memorial, and over £3,000 was soon promised. Delays occurred, and the *Technical Education Act 1889* and the "whisky money" released by the *Local Taxation (Customs and Excise) Act 1890* brought the Borough Council more completely into the situation. The result was that the new Science, Art and Technical Schools building was opened in September 1892. It had a small reference library, probably provided on a similar basis to the former Science Classes already quoted, and there was an arrangement by which any books and periodicals required could be obtained from the Borough Free Public Library (49). The Chairman of the Committee which

supervised the erection and opening of the Technical School was John Shelly, a member of the Free Library Committee and later of the Education Committee. He presented some books to the Art School of the Plymouth Municipal Science,Art and Technical Schools in 1902, of which two volumes have survived, with the bookplate shown in Fig. 35.

Devonport Technical School was in existence in 1893, but was hampered by the lack of its own building until 1899. The origin of its own library has not been uncovered, but probably some form of central reference collection began to be collected from that time. Both Plymouth and Devonport might also have made use of the central South Kensington Library, which loaned books to provincial schools for up to twelve weeks at a time, although the allocation was only two folios, or four quartos, or eight octavos at a time (50).

A few other oddments remain to be noticed in the pre-1914 history of libraries in education and training. The School of Navigation was not the only provision for training for the merchant navy, for in 1874 the training ship *Mount Edgcumbe* was inaugurated, to train a complement of about 250 boys for the merchant service. It was run as an industrial school, and one of the facilities on board was a small library, as was common in the royal naval training ships also at that time (51).

The teachers' training college of St. Mark & St. John moved to Plymouth in 1973 from London, and is not properly a part of this study, although it was founded in 1840 and has a Library with a long history. In Plymouth, the only library provision for student teachers, apart from the Free Public Library which they used extensively from 1876, seems to have been a small collection of books provided by the Free Public Library Committee at the Pupil Teacher Centre in the Salisbury Rd. Board School (52).

The next three sections contain the individual histories of the most fully documented libraries in educational institutions in the Three Towns in the pre-1914 period. The Dockyard School consists of civilian workers although it is an Admiralty school, and seems more appropriately considered in this chapter; while the Training School for

Engineers, which later became the Royal Naval Engineering College, had much in common with the Dockyard School in its early years, and seems appropriate as a special development of technical education rather than a separate devlopment in the next chapter on the libraries of the Armed Services. The final library to be studied belonged to a private theological college, in which young men were educated for the ministry, but later the courses were made available to others as general courses leading to the external degrees of London University.

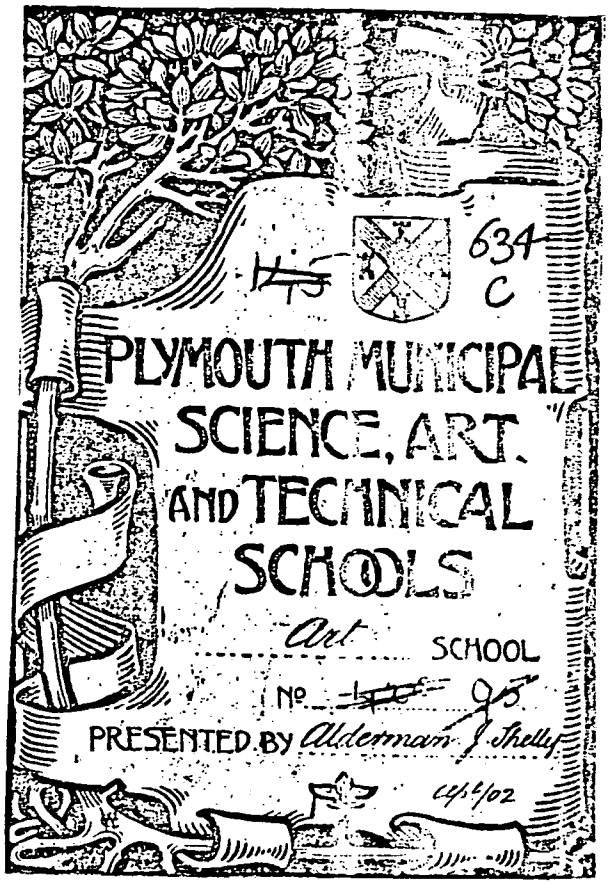


Fig. 35 Bookplate, Plymouth Municipal Science, Art and Technical Schools. Art School, 1902.

8.5 DEVONPORT DOCKYARD SCHOOL

The Royal Dockyards contain a wide variety of trades in which apprenticeships are served; the most important is that of shipwright, but a range of others have been present such as engineers, electrical fitters, boiler-makers, coppersmiths, rope-makers, sail-makers, etc., according to the contemporary technologies in use. An early attempt was made by the Navy Board in 1664 to gain some control over the entry and training of apprentices, when it ordered that every shipwright apprentice should be 16 at entry and serve for seven years (53). From that time onwards a series of measures to control and improve the education and training of apprentices was gradually brought into effect, but at the beginning of the nineteenth-century there was no educational test before entry and many dockyard workers could not read or write ; Lord Barham set up a Commission on the Civil Affairs of the Navy (54) which recommended that teachers should be appointed to teach reading, writing and arithmetic. The recommendations were not adopted straight away, but gradually the advent of technological changes, such as the replacement of sail by steam engines and the evolution of ironclad ships instead of wooden vessels, made it necessary to have better educated employees. In 1842 the Admiralty decided to establish Dockyard Schools for the education of apprentices, and these were the first schools to provide modern technical education although the early efforts left much to be desired. On 28 November 1842 a letter was sent to all Dockyards authorizing the establishment of evening schools in the Dockyards for the apprentices, '"... to secure to them the benefits both of a religious and a professional education " (55). At first it was necessary to teach basic literacy, but from 1847 it was an official pre-requisite of entry that an apprentice should be able to read and write and be acquainted with simple arithmetic; although an advertisement for naval apprentices at Devonport in 1848 only indicates that "boys able to read and write will have the preference" (56). A schoolmaster was to be appointed, and apprentices of all trades were required to attend the daily school, which commenced one and a half hours before the Yard closed every afternoon and lasted three hours, viz. half of the education was provided in Dockyard time and half in the apprentices' own time. The system of instruction provided for five classes, of which the lowest three included students graded by attainments regardless of age, and provided the basic course in reading, writing, arithmetic, scripture, history and geography.

The best students at the end of the third year examinations could go forward onto a two year course of higher instruction on aspects of naval architecture, including the principles of ship construction and appropriate mechanics, hydrostatics and mathematics. A career prospect was provided for the most able students, who after three years could expect to become leading men, and eventually foremen and finally master shipwrights.

The first Dockyard School to open was at Chatham in 1843, but Devonport was not long afterwards, opening on 7 August 1844. A stable building in the old South Yard was converted into two classrooms.

> "Two rooms have been fitted up in a very superior manner for the purpose, and every variety of necessary books and mathematical instruments have been supplied by the Government in the most liberal manner." (57)

The books were textbooks requisitioned from the Admiralty, and were the same as those previously put into use at Chatham and Portsmouth (58). Two masters were appointed, as Devonport was one of the largest yards and the number of apprentices scheduled to attend the school in the first year was over 250. The first master was a foreman of shipwrights who was seconded fulltime to the work; and the second master was a clerk in the storekeeper's department, who was at first only a part-time teacher. The monitorial system was adopted, and ten pupils were chosen to assist the masters in that way. Attendance was compulsory for the apprentices, and a system of fines was introduced instead of corporal punishment, with the intention that the income from that source could be used for such things as the purchase of prizes to be given quarterly to the best students.

It was not long before libraries made their appearance in the Dockyard Schools, as the result of external encouragement rather than local initiative. From 1846 - 1853 the Dockyard Schools were inspected on behalf of the Admiralty by the Senior Inspector of Schools under the Committee of Council on Education, the Rev. H. Mosley, and he made many recommendations which were rapidly adopted for the improvement of the schools. These included the adoption of part-time day as well as evening classes, the consequent increase in fulltime masters, the introduction of practical science and the requisite supply of apparatus, the preparation of suitable textbooks which students could be allowed to take home, the replacement of the monitorial system, and the establishment of lending libraries at each school. It was in his report on the schools

in early 1848 that he recommended that:

> "Each dockyard school ought moreover to be provided with a lending library." (59)

Evidently no school had that amenity, for he specifically remarked in connection with Sheerness:

> " ... and here, as elsewhere, I have been surprised to find that no lending library has been provided for the use of the apprentices." (60)

Apparently he was not completely satisfied with the textbooks in use either, and it was through his influence that a list of books was sent to the Dockyard Schools in October 1848 (61). The first section of the list consisted of twenty two titles of textbooks, and it is not entirely clear whether they were simply intended to be added to the class texts or whether they were to be included in a lending collection in conformity with the recommendations he had already made. Probably Mosley did envisage that some would be available for lending, for the second part of his list appears to be his recommendations for a small reference collection; the latter consisted only of nine titles but spanned a range of subjects:

> "Johnson's Dictionary
> Dictionary of the Arts
> Moseley's Mechanical Principles of Engineering
> Goodwin's Course of Mathematics
> Wallis's Principles of Mechanism
> Hymer's Trigonometry
> Porter's Evidences of Christianity
> Barne's Commentary on the Holy Scriptures
> Nichol's Help to Reading the Bible." (62)

In 1849 Mosley was able to report that libraries had been established in some schools, with Devonport being among this first group. At Devonport, he reported, a lending library had been opened recently, and contained 300 - 400 volumes (63). This was not as large as Woolwich, which had a lending library of 1,100 volumes which were available to dockyard labourers as well as the apprentices (64); but it was better than Portsmouth where "about a dozen books represent the library of the school" (65). The other schools had not yet established libraries, for in his next report Mosley recommended again that:

> " ... Lending Libraries, similar to those at Portsmouth, Devonport, and Woolwich, might with advantage be established in the other yards." (66)

The method by which the libraries were established seems to have been through donations and subscriptions, such as at Chatham where the Library

was established in 1851 by means of books given by the Admiral and books to the value of £23. 16s. which had been purchased from contributions (67). It seems likely that some of the fines levied on the apprentices for misdemeanours might have been applied to book purchase in addition to the subscriptions which they contributed.

In 1853 Rev. Mosley was replaced as the Admiralty's Inspector by Dr. Woolley, who continued to undertake that office when the Education Department of Privy Council was charged with the responsibility of inspecting Admiralty Schools, including Dockyard Schools, from 1856 onwards. Fortunately one of these early published reports provides some details about the Dockyard libraries (68), the substance of which is contained in Table 34.

Table 34 Dockyard school libraries in 1858-9.

	No. vols.	No. Officers	Subscribers Men	Subscribers Boys	Ratios Vols. Subs.	Boys	Annual income £. s. d.	Av. per Subscriber
Chatham	935	20	46	54	8	17	19. 0. 0.	69d.
Deptford	1,230	33	6	21	20	59	16.16. 1.	67d.
Devonport	618	4	2	116	5	5	12.16. 0.	25d.
Portsmouth	2,964	32	160	109	10	27	32.11. 0. + 20. 0. 0.	26d. (Admiralty)
Pembroke	No library							
Sheerness	Library return reported mislaid							
Woolwich	1,329	12	116	64	7	21	16. 0. 0.	20d.

Table 35 Dockyard school enrolments, Christmas 1857.

	Apprentices	Factory and hired boys	Total	Library subscribers as % of Apprentices	Library subscribers as % of total
Chatham	86	54	140	63	39
Deptford	73	-	73	29	29
Devonport	116	43	159	100	73
Pembroke	57	-	57	-	-
Portsmouth	100	116	216	100	50
Sheerness	75	8	83	?	?
Woolwich	74	63	137	86	48
	581	284	865		

These early libraries vary considerably, not only in the size of their stock, but also in their memberships and incomes, which suggests that much was left to local initiative. Devonport, despite its early start, was the smallest both in actual stock and also in the ratio of stock to the number of boys and to the total number of subscribers. It is interesting to see that at Portsmouth and Woolwich the men outnumbered the boys, suggesting that these libraries were, like Chatham, open to all Dockyard workers. The officers were probably those officers of the Dockyard who taught the apprentices, for the fulltime masters were aided by many part-time specialists. It seems likely that each group of subscribers paid a different subscription rate, for it seems most unlikely that the boys at Chatham and Deptford could have afforded the much higher average subscriptions than their counterparts at Devonport, but the variations could be accounted for by different rates from the officers and men. Portsmouth seems to have been unique in having received an Admiralty grant for the Library, and this is probably to be explained in terms of the more advanced training which was available there to the best students emerging from the senior classes at the other Dockyard schools. The library subscriber statistics are also interesting, when compared with the number of students at the schools, as shown in Table 35 , from which the relative importance of the seven schools can be seen. Devonport had the second largest number of pupils, but the largest number of apprentices (69). The high percentage of library membership at Devonport suggests that all of the apprentices were required to enrol as members, and the same was probably true at Portsmouth, for the many similarities between these two large yards probably extended also into the school and library provision generally. Another interesting point is that Devonport had both the smallest stock and the highest percentage membership; if the membership had been voluntary and enthusiastic, it could be expected that the library stock would show more evidence of expansion to sustain the demand! But, although Devonport was in 1861-2 "far in advance of all other ports as regards education " (70), this was probably due to the improved teaching which had been introduced by its Headmaster rather than any extra lustre added through library support, for even in 1857 the monitorial system was still in use at Devonport.

There seems to be a forty year gap before the next reference to the Devonport Dockyard Library. In that intervening period there had

been a number of changes and improvements in the Dockyard schools generally, with the introduction of open competitive entrance examinations, the replacement of heterogenous classes by apprentices more on a level of educational attainment, which permitted a more definite system of instruction and led to higher general standards. Some of the compulsion had been removed, although shipwright apprentices were still required to undergo a three year course; and the general standard of motivation was higher. The subjects contained in the general education course were much as before, with the addition of physical science and industrial mechanics, and the Newcastle Commission in 1861 was pleased to find that there were voluntary attenders at the higher level classes in trigonometry, descriptive geometry, mechanics, hydrostatics and calculus (71). The academic climate had developed gradually into one in which a much greater appreciation of books might be anticipated. The Chatham Library received Admiralty grants in 1861 and 1865 (72), and it is possible that similar grants were made to Devonport although they were not specified separately in the Admiralty's *Estimates* and *Appropriations*. In the 1880s the engineer apprentices who had previously attended the Dockyard School at Devonport separated from it, forming part of the Devonport Training School for Engineer Students which established a separate library (see next section). In 1893 the Devonport Technical School was opened, and some of its courses were strongly supported by the Dockyard employees including apprentices. Some classes for which the Technical School was better equipped than the Dockyard School were no longer held at the latter, and a strong cooperation existed between the schools; for example, in 1894 the Dockyard apprentices formed a substantial percentage of classes in Machine construction and drawing, Applied mechanics, Physics, and Steam, and the attendance of other Dockyard employees meant that the total Dockyard support for these classes was well over 80%. Along with these new educational facilities there emerged new library facilities also, particularly the public library which had been established in 1882. How did these changes affect the Dockyard Library? Theoretically, the increasing emphasis on science and technology throughout the century should have resulted in useful technical and scientific collections, but this does not seem to have happened. An annual grant of £10 was made by the Admiralty to each Dockyard for books on scientific subjects, for the use of the professional officers of the yard, but with permission for the books to be used by the subscribers to the Dockyard Libraries (73). At Chatham the books

were added to the Dockyard School Library, but at Devonport they were kept in the offices of the Chief Constructor, Chief Engineer, and other officers, where by 1900 they formed a valuable but inaccessible collection of about 200 modern works on naval engineering, architecture etc. (74). The School Library had by that year grown to about 4,000 volumes, but it seems to have become a general library not only in its stock but also in its membership. It had become known as the Royal Dockyard Lending Library, and the subscribers consisted in 1900 of 73 officers, 4 workmen, and 43 apprentices. The subscription rates were 5s. per annum for "senior members" and 2s. 2d. per annum for apprentices, the whole totalling about £30; no other income seems to have been available, but the whole of that sum was applied to book purchase. The stock was divided into eight subject classes: Divinity; History, biography and geography; Voyages and travels; Poetry, language and literature; Art and Science; Natural history and botany; Magazines; and Reference works. A "classified catalogue" was printed in 1889, with an alphabetical subarrangement by author in each class, but no copy has been located. The operation of the Library was simple. Books were on open access, and the Library was open on weekdays for borrowing from 10 - 11.30 a.m. and 3 - 4 p.m., and 11 - 11.30 a.m. on Saturdays. The (unknown) Librarian recorded the issue in a ledger which made the usual provision for: date issued, number of volumes, borrower's name, date returned, and title. The Library was managed by a Committee, which was composed of "officers of the Dockyard" - but the Headmaster of the School held the offices of President, Secretary and Hon. Treasurer. The Committee met every six months to choose the books, which any of the 120 registered subscribers could recommend.

Another gap in the history of this Library occurs after the description of its operation in 1900-1, but it appears likely that the Library in 1914 was little different from its state in 1900. Probably the Dockyard Library was, like its counterpart in the Training School for Engineer students, far from being an active aid in the technical education and training of the community it was originally intended to serve.

8.6 DEVONPORT TRAINING SCHOOL FOR ENGINEER STUDENTS

The need for highly educated scientific and technical men to superintend engineering mechanics in the age of steam had been foreseen as early as 1834 by the author of the first steam manual, Otway's *Treatise on steam navigation*; but although the Engineering Branch of the Navy was established in 1836, it was many decades before adequate specialist training facilities and career prospects became available. "Engineer boys" attended the Dockyard Schools as "factory boys", of whom there were thirteen among the "factory and hired boys" contingent at Devonport Dockyard School in 1858. The "Engineer boys" had no different status from the other Dockyard apprentices, for they were not 'entered in' the Navy until they had completed their six years training and became qualified (75). In 1863 the title was changed from "Engineer boy" to "Engineer student", and promotion examinations were introduced for every rank up to Chief Engineer, the syllabi for which included general subjects as well as science and technology. The engineer students still remained effectively civilians until a Committee on the status of training of engineers reported in 1875 that military status should be granted to them and that hostels should be provided in the Dockyards for them. Almost immediately an old battleship, H.M.S. *Marlborough*, was fitted up for the students at Portsmouth, and the Devonport Training School for Engineer Students was built in Keyham Road Devonport. On 1 July 1880 the Training School was opened by the transfer to it of the H.M.S. *Marlborough* students. The course consisted of an integrated pattern of lectures and practical work in the Dockyard, and in the early years the engineer students shared the same tuition as the Dockyard apprentices, but this was soon shown to be unsatisfactory. The poor examination performance of the engineer students was giving concern in 1886, and it was decided to appoint masters of university standing for the engineer students instead of leaving them entirely dependent upon the Dockyard School (76). In 1888 the highly respected academic Professor Worthington was appointed to head the mixture of academic staff who held permanent posts and the naval officers who usually served there about three years. The Training School began to move apart from the Dockyard College, and the engineer students were now in need of their own library.

A library had been established in January 1880 on H.M.S.

Marlborough at Portsmouth, as is known from the existence of a few books in the Library of the Royal Naval Engineering College Manadon which bear the following label:

"TRAINING SCHOOL

ENGINEER STUDENTS

This Library was founded in January, 1880. It is issued on loan subject to the Rules laid down in the General Regulations for Engineer Students and is independent of the ordinary Ship's Library, and is the property of the Training School."

About 560 books were transferred from the training ship to Devonport, and it seems likely that between 1880 and 1886 the students used the Dockyard Library and their own small library; but they were dependent mainly upon their own resources. Each student was provided with one bookshelf in his cubicle, and must have purchased any suitable books he could afford. One of the first students at Keyham was Francis H. Lister, whose letters have been preserved and are now in the National Maritime Museum; on 11 December 1881 he wrote:

"My prize this time amounts to £2.5.0 in books, published prices. I will complete Thackeray's works and get a few technical books as well." (78)

Another early piece of evidence that each student provided his own books comes in the form of an amusing anonymous poem, written by a student at the Training School in 1889-90 after a grim evening wrestling with "the Integral":

"TO MY BOOKS

Grim dusty tomes with titles strange and rare,
That stand in two long rows above my bed,
And ever watch the pillow where my head
Reposes after each day's wear and tear.

You are a hollow mockery; though you keep
Your various colours, red, brown, green and blue,
It needs but one abrupt look into you
To see your beauty is but surface deep.

... ...

But I will have revenge; when I have done
With all this fearful brain-destroying cram,
When I have passed my long and last exam
I'll take you from my bookshelves one by one,

I'll stow you deep down in my sea-chest's gloom
Where you shall never see the light of day,
And leave you all to moulder and decay
Within that vast uncomfortable tomb." (79)

One of the immediate actions by the Government after the appointment of Professor Worthington was to make a more liberal supply of scientific apparatus so that the students' scientific studies could be pursued to better advantage, but:

> "By way of compensating for this the authorities have discontinued the supply of textbooks and stationery." (80)

The students had two reading rooms in which there were presumably some periodicals and newspapers, and in these rooms there were occasional displays of art and photographs, but there appears to have been no real library facility. A student in 1891-2 was very critical of this omission.

> "It is evident to everyone that for any progress we make at College, in what is called general education, ... we are entirely dependent upon ourselves." (81)

What the students wanted, he believed, was a collection of novels, poetry, biography and historical works. Other students evidently felt the same way, and attention began to be focussed slowly on the Library. In 1892-3 Professor Worthington and others set an example by donating books on various subjects; perhaps it was at this time that the Professor gave a set of *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (82, 83). These gentlemen were thanked through the columns of the *Annual 1892-3*, and the Editor seized the opportunity to comment further:

> "A few remarks about the library may not be altogether amiss. The Admiralty provide us with what is termed a 'first class ship's library', consisting of about 850 volumes, and when any of these books get delapidated they can be returned to the store and new copies obtained. For those which come to us from other sources no such provision is made. If we had a Library fund (the subscription to which need not exceed a shilling a term), controlled by either the Recreation Committee or a specially elected committee, we should easily be able to keep the few books we possess in decent order, and should also be enabled to keep the Library up to date by the purchase of new works. The lugging mania which has lately set in has impressed upon some fellows the fact that the technical literature we possess is utterly inadequate to meet their requirements, and an application has been made to the Admiralty for a grant for the provision of really useful professional works. Whether or no it will be successful remains to be seen, but in order that the Library should be a success it is essential that it should be self-supporting." (84)

A practical suggestion made by another student at the same time was that a combined reading-room and library should be planned in the extensions which were currently being rumoured as being imminent. He refers to the existing difficulties experienced in obtaining books

for study, reference or recreation:

> "One of the great disadvantages of our present system of obtaining books, is that a certain one may be removed from the library perhaps at the beginning of the term and lost sight of for the next six months, even the fellow who took it out may have forgotten he had done so until the usual notice requesting returns reminds him of the fact. In the meanwhile many fellows have called for the same book in vain week after week ...." (85)

Evidently only rare checks were made on outstanding loans from the small collection of books which was available. In the following year the Library was apparently the subject of a special debate of the Debating Society, and action by the students followed. A committee of three students was appointed to reorganise the Library and revise the Catalogue. Their first action was to add a considerable number of new works, which seems to have been made possible by the first of many occasional grants from the Recreation Club, for the Club had increased its own income by raising subscriptions from 2s. per month to £1 per term, and consequently was able to support more activities. About 130 worn out or out of date books were withdrawn, and a new set of rules was implemented to ensure that the refurbished Library was properly treated. The idea was put forward that each student should donate a book to the Library when he left College, as was done in many similar institutions (85) and some donations began to come from that source although it was not comprehensively observed. As the result of this increasing attention being shown to the contents of the Library, it was reported in 1894-5 that there had been a slowly increasing interest in the Library by users in that year, although it was almost entirely confined to light literature especially the new books.

> "Our budding physicists, x-chasers, and C.I.M.'s seem to be content with their private resources, and fully seven-eighths of the technical literature is never disturbed." (86)

The rules,which had been imposed because some students still regarded books as a form of missile or football or retained them unduly, led to some reported improvement in the usage of the Library, although the Committee was wary of buying books with valuable plates or maps because of mistreatment. Fines had been introduced, at ½d. per day beyond the permitted seven days loan period, and possibly a small amount of income from that source had become available for books. In 1895-6 fiction was again almost the only literature in demand, with *Trilby* and *Sorrows of Satan* at the top of the reservation lists. Biography, history, purely scientific and technical literature, and religious works

were virtually untouched; but there had been some demand shown for naval literature, especially Brassey, before debates on naval questions, so that section of the stock was being updated (87). Two years later, it was reported with some satisfaction that some of the scientific and technical literature was being "exhumed", presumably to be read (88), but the general standard in the treatment of the books by some users was still poor, for many books had been lost and others heavily mutilated (89), which was particularly serious because of the small size of the stock.

The pattern of additions to the Library varied considerably from year to year. Books could at first be purchased only when an occasional grant was received from the Recreation Fund, but in 1898 it was decided to make a regular annual grant of £20 from that source (90). In 1894-5 about 90 books had been purchased, but the following year only six, and 40 in 1896-7 when the acquisitions included Rowe's *Perambulation of Dartmoor* and several *Royal Navy handbooks*. In 1894-5 there were about 30 books donated, and 50 the next year although the latter year contained the exception donation of books purchased by funds transferred from the defunct Junior Mess at Greenwich. The Navy Records Society presented several of its publications in 1896-7. The Ship's Library was replenished infrequently, and it was the expectation of a new consignment of works for that section of the Library which held up the preparation of the new Catalogue in 1894-5; the replenishment eventually arrived and made useful addition of 280 volumes (91). The stock reached a total of about 2,500 volumes by 1901 (92), including the Ship's Library which now had about 1,000 volumes. The stock required some organisation, and this was apparently carried out in 1900-1 when it was divided into eight classes which were similar to but not identical with the classes in the Dockyard School Library, viz.: Religious works; Biography and history; Voyages and travel; Law and politics; Science, art and technical; Prose fiction; Poetry, drama and classics: and Magazines (93). Unfortunately no copy of the printed *Catalogue* of 1896 survives to show the relative strength of the different classes, but comments in the *Annual* suggest that a significant proportion was added to the prose fiction class with some attention also to science and technical literature. The *Catalogue* is interesting because the student library committee had managed to enlist Alfred Cotgreave as the supervisor, editor and proofreader (94). This isolated

reference to Mr. Cotgreave in connection with the Three Towns suggests that perhaps he was a personal acquaintance of one of the students, for he does not seem to have had local connections, and it would have seemed more natural for the students to turn to one of the local borough librarians for advice and assistance.

In 1897 an extension was built on to the College to accommodate cadets from the college which had been closed in Portsmouth. This permitted a certain amount of reorganisation of rooms. The opportunity was taken to turn one of the former classrooms, the South Study, into a reading room for newspapers and magazines. The precise arrangements for the Library are not clear over the next few years, but comments suggest that it was physically decentralised, although collectively managed by a committee which had been increased in 1898 to five members (95). In 1898 there was in addition to the reading room, a silent study in which the reference library was kept; this

> " ... is a great deal used by seniors, and much valuable assistance has been rendered by specialising text-books mentioned and recommended by the masters. There are also some Badmintons in the new recreation-room ... which ... are rarely seen on the shelf to which they belong." (96)

Some staff were taking an interest, such as Mr. Dupen, one of the officer engineers on the staff, who was thanked for the advice given to the committee in selecting suitable works and for his donations. In 1900/01 there were further changes affecting the arrangements for magazines (27). The senior entries now used the former new wing recreation room as a combined billiard and smoking room, in which they also had "an excellent assortment of magazines", and the magazines formerly found in the new wing recreation room were moved into one end of the junior smoking room, which was also intended to serve as a general recreation room. It now emerges that this provision was distinct from the Library, being supplied from a separate fund, for three years later it was announced that:

> "Much regret was caused at the beginning of the year by the announcement that we were overdrawing the amount allowed us usually for periodicals and daily papers, and consequently the supply had to be much curtailed." (98)

The Library itself in 1900 still continued to be

> " one of the most widely patronized of the College institutions, and helps greatly to while away the

tedium of wet Saturday and Sunday afternoons and evenings." (99)

Most of the new purchases were fiction,

> " ... as light reading is required after the long hours spent in factory and school, but several good historical and biographical sketches have been added, and a few sound technical works, which latter it is hoped will be found to be of some use as an adjunct to the stereotyped college text-books." (100)

A further fillip to the professional side of the Library was given in May 1903 (101) by the supply of up-to-date technical works by the Admiralty, the titles being ones selected and listed by the Library Committee as being " ... too numerous and expensive for individual purchase" (102). This was particularly welcome, for " ... the technical portion of the library being so much out of date as to be practically useless ..." (103). In fact, the Library Committee pointed out, although

> "From the actual number of volumes it would seem that the library was a fairly large one, ... a fair estimate of its utility may be formed when it is considered that three-quarters of these volumes are of absolutely no interest to us, and are rarely, if ever, moved from their positions on the shelves." (104)

Some dramatic improvements occurred during the next two years. The South Study was officially designated the Library; "books of reference, works on history, travel and philosophy" were transferred to it (35), and placed under the care of a cadet captain and four third year cadets. This arrangement supplied a long-felt want.

> "For years the shelves in the South Study were occupied by a number of ancient volumes ... of little practical use to a budding engineer. The majority of these relics have now disappeared, and an excellent variety of books has taken their place ... It seems a pity, however, that some of the books in this library cannot be issued to students for short periods, ... especially ... books of travel and other works which scarcely come under the heading of Books of Reference ..." (106)

At the same time the old library stock was requiring considerable maintenance, and a large proportion of the annual grant was devoted to rebinding about 100 volumes per year (107). The lending section of the library was now apparently in separate accommodation, in which it was "somewhat encumbered by typewriters and buff foolscap, ..." (108). The year 1903/4 was marked by an unparalleled increase in the number of thoroughly readable books, from three sources. The Admiralty gave a complete ship's library of about 500 books, which included many standard

works and an excellent collection of the best English novels. More books were purchased because of a slight increase in the annual grant, together with more judicious expenditure by obtaining good secondhand volumes from Smith's and Mudies Libraries. A very large number was also donated; and cadets were specifically encouraged to donate the second-hand novels they bought at railway bookstalls, after reading them (109).

As the result of all of these new additions, the old Catalogue had become completely out-of-date, and a new one was produced in 1904/5; this time, it was in the form of large cards, about four feet by three feet, framed, and displayed in the recreation rooms and lower corridor. "At least, they are a distinct improvement on the cards and books that used to be in vogue" (110). The Catalogue was presumably a list of both the lending and reference stock; but it appears that there were now two physically separate collections, the Lending Library and the Selborne Library, for at the College "At home" in 1907/8 it is mentioned that the "Lending Library" served as a Ladies cloakroom and the "Selborne Library" was set apart as a card room for the occasion (111).

The main interest of the cadets was clearly in the Lending Library, which was in a flourishing condition in 1907/8 and had increased by about 120 new mainly fiction books in the previous year (112). Some details of its operation were described in 1901, and appear to have continued unchanged for the next few years (113). Books were issued daily from 12.30 to 13.30 except Sundays, and there were 200 borrowers. All books had to be selected from the catalogue and were issued by the Writer in charge, who recorded the date of issue and number of volume opposite the borrower's name in an indexed ledger. This suggests that the former open access had been replaced by closed access arrangements in which there was some form of control. Books were issued for seven days, with maximum renewal of three weeks, and were not to be taken out of the College. The popularity of the Library can be judged by the fact that about 500 books were issued weekly to about 200 borrowers, who were allowed to have only one book at a time. The "Writer-in-charge" is probably to be identified with a Mr. Herbert whose retirement in 1907/8 was referred to as:

> "... the loss of our Librarian. Mr. Herbert has filled a post, which required patience and hard work, with great credit ....

> His successor, Mr. Cook, has very quickly settled down to his duties, and has already done much useful work." (114)

Considering that the College was the only one of its kind in the United Kingdom, the Library appears so far to have been very inadequate for the students who needed the latest and best scientific and technical works to support their courses leading to examinations in such subjects as mathematics, statics, hydrostatics, dynamics, mechanics, heat, light, practical engineering - to name but a few. The new influx of professional reference stock in 1902/3 seems to have laid the foundation of this most important section of the Library, which appears to have been renamed "Selborne Library". Here, further improvements were made in 1905/6 when

> "A whole host of the very latest text books on subjects have been added to the already vast store of knowledge resting on the shelves. They are in great demand, the number varying from day to day, but, we are sorry to say, not with the cadets, who seem to make very little use of the books" (115).

Perhaps this was not surprising, for the name "Selborne Library" gives a clue to what was happening. When Lord Selborne was First Lord of the Admiralty, in 1903, he had been responsible for introducing the "Fisher-Selborne" scheme for training engineers; this scheme planned to merge the education of executive and engineer officers until they reached the age of 22, after which they would specialise. This brought about major changes. Osborne and Dartmouth Colleges were set up for officer training, and Keyham was designated as the College to provide the subsequent specialist course for engineers, instead of continuing to train cadets aged 14 to 19 years. Thus, although the reference library might have been renamed Selborne Library simply as a compliment, it is more likely that this part of the Library was being developed along lines which would make it suitable for the planned new courses.

The terminal date of this study, 1914, therefore found Keyham College empty during the changeover to the new scheme, after which World War I intervened and showed the need for rethinking of engineer training; this eventually led to the modern success of the Royal Naval Engineering College, Manadon, where a few books from the pre-1914 Library can still be found.

8.7 WESTERN COLLEGE

The Western College was a theological college with a history of moving from place to place, which included Plymouth from 1844 to 1901. It moved from Plymouth to Bristol where it remained until 1968, when it amalgamated with the Congregational College in Manchester. Some College archives were probably lost during the earlier moves, but at some stage in the move to Manchester the remaining College archives appear to have been mislaid. Widespread but unsuccessful enquiries have been pursued among the organisations and the people concerned with the College when it finally broke up prior to the merger. It seems to be generally believed that there were archives and that they were not destroyed, but so far the papers have not turned up in the Westcountry, London or Manchester. It still seems hopeful that one day the archives might be recovered to shed further light on the history of the Library. However, published *Annual reports* have been located for the period 1836 to 1860, and the following account is based on these reports; in order to avoid breaking up the narrative too frequently by references, references will only be given in this section when they relate to sources other than the College's *Annual reports*.

The College began in the mid eighteenth-century in order to counteract the doctrine of Arianism which was spread through the Western Counties by the Revs. Hallett and Pierce of Exeter and others who came under their influence. In 1751 the Congregational Fund Board in London decided to establish an Academy in the West of England for the education of young men for the Christian ministry. They chose as the Tutor the Rev. Lavington of Ottery, and the Academy opened in 1752 with four students. The early Tutors were practising pastors, so the Academy was located wherever the Tutor's Church was located - in turn, Ottery, Bridport, Taunton and Axminster - and by 1828 about 85 students had been educated successfully and become ministers. It was then considered desirable to disassociate the office of Tutor from pastoral work and to make it a fulltime post. The Academy moved to Exeter, where a building was obtained. These changes clearly involved greater cost; the Congregational Fund Board had provided liberal financial support to the early Tutors and students, but although it continued to contribute for many years, it was now expected that the Academy's financial support should come from subscriptions, donations and congregational collections

from the non-conformist churches in the five Western Counties (Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Somerset and Gloucestershire). New arrangements were embodied in the Trust Deed dated 31 December, 1833. The object of the Academy was the education of young men for the Christian ministry, among protestant dissenters, of the Independent or Congregational denominations holding certain beliefs specified in the Schedule to the Trust Deed. A donation of £10 or more made the donor a subscriber for life; £1 or more made the donor a subscriber for the year. A Committee was elected annually at the general meeting of the subscribers and consisted of the Treasurer, Secretary and between fifteen and thirty others of whom one half were "Protestant Dissenting Ministers".

In 1844 it became necessary to move from Exeter to another site in the West of England. The possible locations were Bristol, Taunton, or the Three Towns. Bristol was not sufficiently central, nor were the ministers of Bristol or Taunton prepared to accept the responsibility. Consequently, the Three Towns was chosen, and it seems natural that the choice of a site should fall on commercial Plymouth rather than naval Devonport. Another change took place in the Academy upon its move to Plymouth; instead of the Tutor receiving occasional teaching assistance from local clergy acting as Classics Tutor etc., at Plymouth a fulltime Classical and Mathematical Tutor was appointed in addition to the Theological Professor who was also the official Tutor or Head of the College. The number of students was never large, usually being about twelve in total. The general course of study took five years, and contained the range of theological, classical and general subjects shown in Table 36 . For several years the Western College functioned in Wyndham Place, but in April 1860 the foundation stone was laid for its own building which was opened June 1861; this building then occupied spacious grounds, at the Mannamead end of Mutley, which were later built upon and named College Avenue after the Western College.

It seems likely that the Library was established when the Academy became a separate fulltime establishment in Exeter. Before that time the numbers of students in training at any one time was unlikely to exceed two or three and they probably made use of the Tutor's personal library and began to acquire their own books. By

TABLE 36. Western College curriculum 1849

SUBJECT	STUDIED IN YEAR				
	1	2	3	4	5
English language	x				
Rhetoric	x				
Logic	x				
Greek and Latin classics	x	x	x	x	
Mathematics	x	x	x		
Mental philosophy		x			
Ethics		x			
Hebrew		x	x	x	
Natural religion		x			
False religions		x			
New Testament exegesis		x	x	x	x
Natural philosophy		x	x		
Evidences of Christianity			x		
Doctrinal theology			x	x	
Analysis of standard works			x	x	x
Ecclesiastical history				x	
Church government				x	
Chaldee				x	
Biblical criticism					x
Hermeneutics					x
Homiletics					x
Syriac					x
The Christian Fathers					x

1837/1838 a library was in existence, although it was small, deficient, and probably newly established. The General Meeting in 1838 resolved "that the Library be increased by books to the value of 100£." Some of the gentlemen present at the meeting undertook to provide £5 each towards the £100 if twenty people would do the same, and a general appeal for the Library was also made:

> "Books are wanted in every department of the Classics, on Biblical criticism, - on Mental and Moral Science, - and on Theology, - the publications of our own and other countries. Donations of books, as well as of money to purchase them, would confer a great benefit on the Institution."

The financial report in the following year shows some success, for £97. 13s. Od. was spent on new books for the Library; but the excess of expenditure over income was £106. 15s. Od., which was attributed as being almost wholly due to the purchase of Library books. The College was dependent upon subscriptions, donations and collections for its income, and these sums varied from year to year. The priority in each year had to be given to the payment of salaries and upkeep of the building, and expenditure on new books was clearly seen as highly desirable but it was dependent upon a "sufficient income" which never seems to arrive!

References to the Library during the next five years show that it was by no means neglected despite financial difficulties. In 1840 £5. 18s. Od. was spent on binding and repairing books, and in the following years sums varying from £4 to £15 were spent annually on books, despite the College's accumulated deficit of over £600 which had to be eliminated by a special subscription fund. During fund-raising in London in 1843 a donation of £32 worth of books for the Library was received. In the next year eight major works were purchased by earmarked donations from David Derry (the Treasurer) and Thomas Jacomb; they consisted of:

> "Novum Testementum Graece, Griesbach
> Trommii Concordantiae, Amstelodami 2v. fol.
> Cours Grec, par Gail, 4v. 8vo. Paris, an. 7
> Hieronymi Opera 9v. folio
> Chrysostomi Opera 10v. fol.
> Originis Opera, Latiné 2v. fol.
> Ephrem Syri Opera, Latiné 8 tom. 8vo. Parisiis, 1843
> Justini Martyris Opera fol."

All of these works reflect clearly the subjects described in the

curriculum. In 1846 the Library was considerably enlarged by a bequest of six hundred volumes from Miss C. Hunter of Bath. In the same year it was reported that " ... further efforts are needed to place the Library on a footing at all worthy of the Institution"; but no reference was made in the next three years to either purchases or donations. The College, (which had changed its name from Western Academy to Western College in 1846), was in difficult financial straits. Its average income 1840-1844 was £643 p.a. of which £80 came from donations, £103 from property of the College, and £460 from subscriptions; £120 of the latter came from the Congregational Board Fund, which in 1846 signified its intention to withdraw its support. The average annual expenditure was £760, about £117 in excess of income. One of the measures taken to improve the situation was that of opening the College to fee-paying non-resident general students who wished to pursue the College's course of study. This was made more attractive by the 1847 affiliation of the College with the University of London. The Committee recognised that:

> "This alteration urgently suggests the need of additions to the College Library. The general funds of the institution are so fully engaged, that this most important matter has been much neglected; ..."

An appeal was made for donations in 1850 and was repeated in different wording in the next four annual reports. The response was slow at first but the Library increased steadily in size. In 1850-51 six works were donated; 1851-52 45 works; 1852-53 17 works; 1853-54 34 works; 1854-55 32 works. Particularly generous donations of money and books were made by the brothers Thomas and John Windeatt, including Volpy's 60 volume edition of the Classics and 41 volume *Biblical cabinet*. Several works were donated by the Tutors, Revs. Dr. Alliott and S. Newth. From 1850 a list of donations was published in the *Reports*, and in 1855 there was the further innovation of printing the Librarian's name after the donations list. The Librarian was a student, appointed or elected annually; probably the system had been in operation for many years before 1855. The 1855 entry for the Library is of interest for two reasons - the Librarian himself, and the indication of the stock size. The Librarian was F.E. Anthony, one of the two senior ministerial candidates who had entered the College in 1851; he was to graduate with an M.A. in 1856 and become the College's new Professor of Classics, Mathematics and Natural Philosophy; in the latter capacity his name occurs in connection

with many Plymouth libraries and educational institutions. The interesting information about the Library stock was that the 130 volumes donated in 1854-55 brought the number of volumes in the Library to the sizeable total of 2,122! Donations continued to be received, varying from six to ninety-eight and averaging over sixty volumes per annum over the next five years; and all of the donations appear to have been currently effective stock relating centrally to the curriculum. In 1861 the College opened its purpose built accommodation at Mannamead, which included a library room above the porch.

Details of the development of the College and Library are lacking for the next four decades, but apart from modifications to the curriculum, the introduction of a choice of courses of different lengths, selected from the main course, for the lay students, and a modest expansion in student numbers, it appears that the College continued to function much as before. In 1901 it was decided (for unclear reasons) to break up the institution by transferring the teaching staff and Library to Bristol. Just before the transfer, the Library Association held its Annual Conference in Plymouth, and the Borough Librarian presented a paper on the libraries of Plymouth in which he quoted particulars about the Library supplied by the College's Theological Tutor, Dr. C. Chapman:

> "The library now contains between 8,000 and 9,000 volumes, many of the works being valuable and rare. Theology proper, Exegesis of the Old and New Testament, ecclesiastical and secular history and philosophy form the bulk of the works contained in the library. The works of the Greek and Latin Fathers, in good editions, are well represented. The Reformation and Post-Reformation divines are in good evidence. It has also the best modern works bearing on the Greek New Testament Exegesis and Biblical Criticism, also on the "Higher Criticism", as applied to the Old Testament. Also good representatives of the best editions of the Greek and Latin classics. In Church history there are copies of some of the best original sources, and also of all the best modern works." (116)

CHAPTER NINE. SCIENTIFIC, MEDICAL AND LAW LIBRARIES.

The libraries which will be studied in this chapter are two sub-types of that group which is now usually referred to as Special Libraries. One of the libraries, the Marine Biological Association of the United Kingdom Library, is a scientific library which could also be considered to be the library of a learned society, for the Marine Biological Association was a late comer in the tradition of the major learned societies. It is of interest because it was the only Library, apart from those of the Armed Services, which was established in the Three Towns as the result of national factors instead of as the result of local need or influence. The other libraries to be considered in this chapter are medical and law libraries, and come within the "learned profession" type of special library. Usually, libraries associated with the learned professions are thought of automatically in terms of being civilian libraries, but the medical profession is also strongly represented in the Armed Services. The Medical Library of the Royal Naval Hospital Plymouth has much more in common with civilian medical libraries than with the other kinds of naval libraries, and it has therefore been included in this chapter, where it forms an interesting contrast with the Library of the Plymouth Medical Society.

One particular feature which will be noticed in connection with most of the libraries in this chapter is that they were early libraries of their particular kind. This almost certainly reflects the problems experienced by professional men in obtaining the increasing output of professional literature which was taking place in the eighteenth-century. Not only was there the problem of the cost of purchasing the widening range of professional books and periodicals, but in the Three Towns there was also the problem of isolation from the specialised book markets. The population of the Three Towns was large enough to require the services of substantial numbers of medical and legal practitioners, and it seems a natural development that these professions should have produced early libraries in response to their needs.

9.1 THE MARINE BIOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED KINGDOM

The Library of the Marine Biological Association of the United Kingdom (M.B.A.) differed from the other civilian libraries of the Three Towns in that it was founded through factors mainly external to the area, and it served a national and international group of users. It was also the only exclusively scientific library in the Three Towns, although its concentration on marine biology meant that the Plymouth Institution's Library probably had a better representation of other scientific subjects.

The rise of modern scientific societies began in Italy in the sixteenth century, spreading in the seventeenth century to England, France and Germany. The oldest scientific society in the United Kingdom was the Royal Society, founded in 1662, which dealt with all the then known sciences (1). As scientific knowledge developed, so more specialised societies were founded, such as the Linnean Society, established in 1788 for the study of natural history, and the Zoological Society, founded in 1826 for the advancement of zoology and animal physiology (2). By the time the even more specialised Marine Biological Association was established in 1884 there existed a long tradition of exchanging scientific information; serials - in the form of journals, transactions and reports - were an established form of disseminating scientific information and research reports (3). The importance of libraries had also been recognised, and the formation of a library for the M.B.A. was a normal expectation which was fulfilled by founding the Library in the same year that its parent organisation was established, 1884. In order to understand its development, it is necessary to understand something of its community, the M.B.A. itself.

The M.B.A. was founded on 31 March 1884 at a meeting of eminent scientists at the Royal Society in London, and was the culmination of developments over the previous fifty years. In the early nineteenth century the fishing industry had begun to change significantly from a comparatively small local private industry into a commercial industry; railways opened up new inland markets for fresh fish; the advent of the steam engine opened up more distant new fisheries ;and the fishing boats were of larger construction and their

methods more efficient. By the 1880s there was growing concern about the diminution of fish stock through the over-fishing which had taken place, and national and international interest was aroused. What could be done? Nothing, without more information about the fish themselves. Although aquaria had been founded since about 1860 in places like Paris and Hamburg, these were commercial ventures for their owners' profit, and the interests of management and scientific research clashed. The French were the first to establish a marine biological station solely for research, followed by Austria, U.S.A., Holland, and the finest station was established at Naples by the German Government (4). The International Fisheries Exhibition held in London in 1883 directed attention to the importance of fisheries and the need for a similar scientific research facility in England. The purpose of the meeting at the Royal Society on 31 March 1884 was to remedy the situation.

The meeting was held under the auspices of the Royal Society, whose President, Professor Huxley, chaired the debate. Many eminent scientists were in attendance, including Sir Lyon Playfair, Professor Ray Lankester (convener) and Sir John Lubbock; there were also influential supporters, such as the Duke of Argyle. It was resolved that there was an urgent need of one or more laboratories on the British coast, similar to those already founded elsewhere, for research leading to "the improvement of zoological and botanical sciences and the increase of knowledge about the food, life, conditions and habits of British food fishes and molluscs in particular, and the animal and vegetable resources of the sea in general." (5) The next step was a resolution to form a "Society for the Biological Investigation of the Coasts of the United Kingdom", and a provisional Council was established which included Professor Huxley as President, and the Secretary was Professor Ray Lankester who had been a major force in promoting interest and bringing about the meeting (6).

By the first formal meeting of Council in June the Society's name had been established as the Marine Biological Association of the United Kingdom, and already there were ninety members and a fund of £1,500 (7). At the first annual general meeting in June 1885 membership had risen to 277, donations stood at nearly £8,000 (8), and by June 1886 the fund had reached nearly £15,000 (9). Amongst the strongest financial

supporters were the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge and the Fishmongers' Company; they were each entitled to a permanent seat on the Council, the governing body of the M.B.A., by virtue of the rule that corporate bodies or individuals donating more than £500 had the right to a permanent seat of life membership on the Council. Early consideration was given by the Council to a site for the laboratory; Plymouth, Weymouth and Bangor were considered, and on 25 July 1884 it was agreed that Plymouth was the most desirable situation because it was a large important fishing port and the Sound contained a rich marine fauna. The site chosen was on Plymouth Hoe, adjacent to the Citadel. Plymouth Borough Council welcomed this new local development, and a local gift of £1,000 made it possible for the local eminent scientist Mr. Spence Bate to take the accompanying seat on the M.B.A. Council. A small committee was appointed to prepare plans of a building costing not more than £5,000 (10), but it reported that a laboratory would cost £10,000 plus £700 p.a. to maintain it (11). The Association's assets were then estimated at £5,000 plus £400 p.a., and it was decided to apply for a Treasury grant of £5,000 plus £400 - £500 p.a. (12). The object of the M.B.A. was much in the national interest, and the Treasury promptly responded favourably in December 1885 with a capital grant of £5,000 and a revenue grant of £500 p.a. for five years. This grant was made on condition that there was a formal audit of accounts, frequent detailed reports would be submitted, work should be aimed at practical results concerning the breeding and management of food fishes, and laboratory space should be provided for competent investigators designated by state-recognised authorities (13). These conditions made it essential for the M.B.A. to give serious consideration to the organisation and the efficient management of its affairs, and the first step was to appoint a fulltime salaried Resident Superintendent/Director, upon whom much responsibility would devolve.

The first Director of the Plymouth Laboratory was Walter Heape, who was appointed from 1 Jan. 1886 (14). He had previously held the paid office of Assistant Secretary and was already familiar with the work of the Association. The Council made no stipulation as to the details of his new duties, "having been informed that you are thoroughly interested in the enterprise of the Association and will undoubtedly do your best for its success" (15). Mr. Heape moved to Plymouth by 1 July 1886, with lodging allowance until his residence in the Laboratory was

ready for occupation in 1887. A second salaried officer, the Naturalist, was appointed in 1887, and work began, long before the official opening, on two reports - the fishing industry of Plymouth, and a preliminary list of the fauna and flora of Plymouth Sound. Meantime, the Council decided in January 1887 that the M.B.A. should publish a journal in which reports, papers and notes should be included, to keep all members informed and to act as a channel of making known research findings to other scientists. The *Journal* was irregular at first but soon proved to be a useful vehicle of exchange through which other specialist serials from all over the world could be obtained for the M.B.A. Library; in 1891 it was decided to publish it twice per year (16).

The earliest reference to the M.B.A. Library appears to be in a memorandum, *Nature of the building, management, and work of the proposed marine Laboratory and experimental Aquarium,* which was considered by Council on 25 July 1884.

> "One of the rooms ... must be set apart as a library and writing room, and must contain as complete a series of works on Marine Zoology and Botany, Pisciculture, and such matters, as can be brought together. The provision of such a library is one of the special conveniences which would be offered to naturalists working in the Laboratory." (17)

This intention was made manifest by the inclusion in the application to the Treasury of £200, out of the estimated £900 annual running costs, for "Assistants' purchase of books, chemicals, etc." (18) In May 1887 the Council launched an appeal for donations of books to the Library (19) and in the following month reported:

> "One of the most important appliances which the M.B.A. must possess in its Plymouth Laboratory is a first rate Biological Library. Before making purchases the Council have decided to ask the Members and friends of the Association to assist in the formation of this Library by gifts of books .... The Library will be the first room completed and fitted in the Laboratory building, ... A list of donors of books will be permanently displayed in the Library ..." (20)

The appeal asked particularly for duplicate volumes on fauna and flora and such books as the owners seldom used, and met a favourable response. By December 1887 the Director was able to report many donations by institutions, publishers and individuals, as well as successful exchange arrangements negotiated with the Canadian, Danish, Dutch, French, German, Japanese, Norwegian and U.S.A. Governments (21). Council decided to assist the process by setting up a Library Committee "for the purpose of supporting the formation of a library ..." (22); this committee of

three was authorised to apply to the authorities of Cambridge Massachusetts for their publications on marine biology, and to purchase books to the value of £50 in addition to a donation of £38 earmarked for book purchase from the Cambridge University Committee (23). The President was instructed to apply to the Treasury for copies of the Challenger publications for the Library; and the Secretary was instructed to find out from the officers of the Royal Society, Linnean Society and Zoological Society, whether the M.B.A. could have the privilege of borrowing books for use in the Library at the Plymouth Laboratory (24). The reply to the latter request is not recorded, but was apparently not successful with the Linnean Society at that time for the request was repeated in 1892 (25). The Library Committee reported that more money was needed, and Council authorised it to spend an additional £100 at once (26). The Library was clearly the subject of much interest, activity and good will, but no-one had particular responsibility for it.

The first Director resigned with effect 31 March 1888, but in his report on the duties of the Director he expressed the view that "The Director should officiate as Librarian." (27) Consequently the Council embodied in the job description for the next Director the phrase that he was "... to act as Librarian ..."(28) Mr. G.C. Bourne was appointed in April 1888 to be Director of Plymouth Laboratory and Secretary of the Association (29), and he took up the postin June 1888. By this time the official opening on 30 June 1888 was fast approaching, and descriptions of the Laboratory's work and accommodation were being published particularly in the scientific press (30, 31). The structure consisted of a central building containing the tank room and laboratories, the East Wing which was mainly the Director's residence, and the West Wing which contained the Caretaker's rooms, laboratories, and, on the second floor, the Library, workroom and washrooms (Fig. 36). The Library occupied the whole of the south side of the second floor, in a room 31½' by 16' which was fitted with shelves on the east, west and north walls, and was furnished with writing tables and chairs. The Council reported to the fourth annual general meeting in June 1888 that the Laboratory was now complete, and that:

> "... a considerable addition of books of reference on marine zoology and botany and on fishery questions is in place in the library." (32)

The Library Committee had fulfilled its purpose in forming a nucleus of the Library and it was apparently disbanded, for it was reported

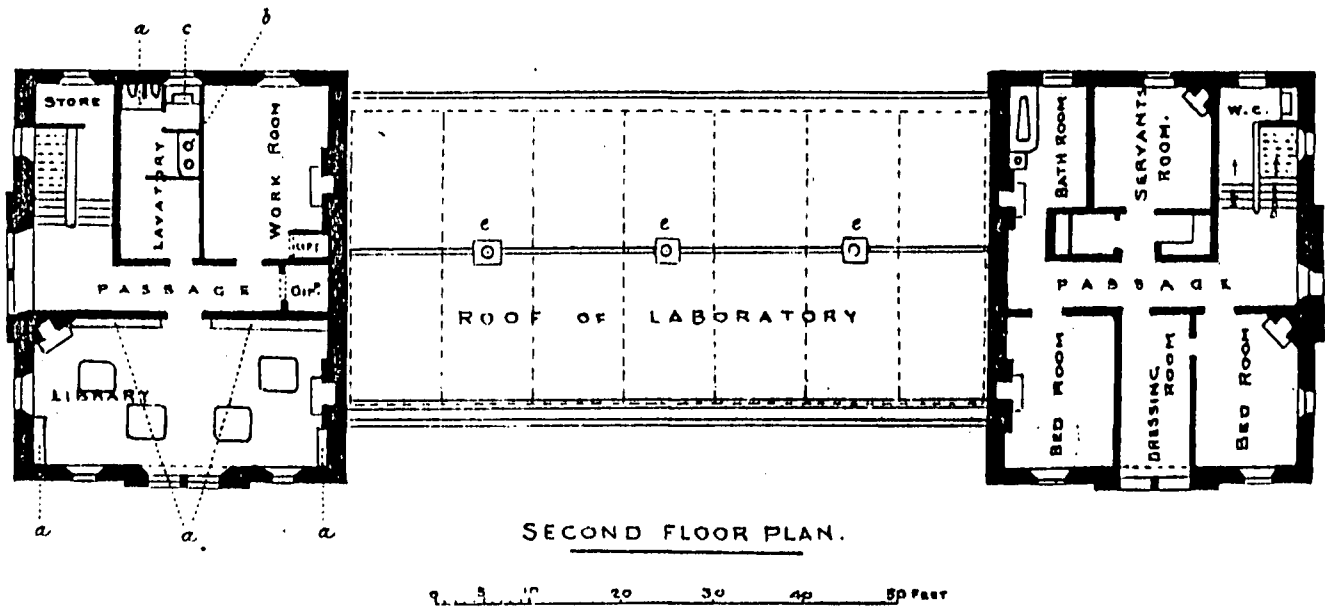


Fig. 36. Marine Biological Association. Plan showing the Library, 1888

at the same meeting that:

> "... in future it will be the business of the Director to make purchases for the Library and to apply for gifts of books. A sum of £100 a year has been assigned by the Council for the maintenance of the Library and purchase of books." (33)

This, as will be seen later, was optimistic!

The *Catalogue* of the Library was published in July 1888 (34) and shows that there had been an excellent response to the appeal for donations. In the first section, "Fisheries", fishery reports had been donated by the Government or official fishery departments of Italy, France, Norway, Germany, Russia, U.S.A., Canada, Scotland and United Kingdom. In the second section, "Periodicals", eight of the fourteen titles had been donated. The third section, "books of Reference", lists catalogues donated by the Zoological Society, British Museum of Natural History, Australian Museum, Radcliffe Library, and the Museum of Comparative Anatomy at Harvard College; the last was through Professor A. Agassiz, who also donated a considerable number of other publications. The last section, "General and special works", comprised a variety of monographs and papers. Many were donated by their authors such as F.J. Bell and W.C. McIntosh, who were members of the M.B.A.; the publishers J. & A. Churchill presented six works; and there were several miscellaneous donations including the local publication *Doidge's Annual*, and *The works of F.M. Balfour*. Apart from these last two works, the Library contained very little which was not directly relevant to the work of the M.B.A. The total collection described in the *Catalogue* represents about 300 individual works of which 14 were serials and 135 offprints of papers; there were about 400 volumes plus the offprints. The wisdom of waiting to see what would be donated had been justified, for less than twenty of these works had been purchased by the Association and these were highly specialised works, including several works published in Germany, and others in Geneva, Vienna, Paris, Christiana, and Boston (U.S.A.) as well as London. The Library was small, but from the start it was truly international in its special subject field; about one quarter of the works were in foreign languages with substantial holdings of German and French and representation in Norwegian, Danish, Italian, Dutch and Russian.

It has already been noted that the Director was required to

act as Librarian, amongst his many other duties, and certainly the initial organisation and exploitation of such a specialised multi-lingual collection required some familiarity with the subject and languages, which he might be expected to possess. However he had many other duties and the question of delegation must have arisen quite quickly. The revised byelaws in March 1889 described the Director's duty as follows:

> "14. It shall be the duty of the Director to maintain the laboratories, equipment *and library*, and other property of the Association, in a state of efficiency- ...." (35)

From this, it would seem that the Director was responsible for the Library, but was not required personally to perform library work if the opportunity came to delegate it. For a long while it seems that no such opportunity arose. The Association had appointed a Naturalist to supervise and carry out the scientific work of the Laboratory, but he and the Director were the only salaried professional officers for a few years; at the non-professional level there were a caretaker/engineer, a fisherman, and a "laboratory servant" (36). From 1888 a special allowance was given to the Director for some clerical assistance, for he was also the Association's Secretary (37), and in 1893 this was changed into an established post for a clerk at £60-£80 p.a. It is likely that this clerical assistant was involved in the routine recording of library additions, for an Accessions Register was commenced in 1891. From about 1895, however, the evidence of the handwriting in the register suggests the regular involvement of a person who can probably be identified with the Laboratory Attendant. This is supported by brief entries in the Director's *Reports*, for in 1897 it was proposed to allow the post of Director's Assistant to lapse, and the Director stated in January that "Smith, the present Laboratory attendant" could do most of the routine work if helped by an older, more competent boy (than the one then employed) (38) and reported in May that in future Mr. Smith was to have charge *of the office work* in addition to the specimen business and Laboratory, for which his wages would be raised from 34s. to 40s. per week (39). It was almost certainly Smith who kept up the Accessions Register until 1905. In 1898, however, the Director requested the appointment of an assistant naturalist "to act under my direction ..., who would also *take charge of the Museum and Library* and of the general outdoor collection work, including fishery work if required." (40) Mr. R. A. Todd was appointed to this post but no specific activity in connection

with the Library is mentioned in the *Minutes*. He was promoted to Director's Assistant in 1901 (41) and was succeeded in that post in 1902 by Mr. S. Pace (42). The latter definitely had a personal involvement in the Library, for in April 1903 it was recorded that:

> "Mr. Pace has now practically completed the recataloguing of the Library." (43)

Mr. Pace left in 1905 and the Director was authorised to make temporary arrangments for carrying on the work (44). Shortly after this, the Director reported that he had appointed an extra clerk, at 18s. per week, whose duties included the general work of the Laboratory (45). The appointee was a lady clerk, experienced in book-keeping, typewriting and shorthand, and it emerges from later evidence that this lady clerk was Miss Amy Rose Clark who eventually became the Librarian. Miss Clark's clear book-keeper's hand appears consistently in the Accessions Register from December 1905 onwards, interspersed annually for between two and four weeks by the former regular hand while she took her holiday. The latter almost certainly belonged to the Senior Laboratory Assistant Mr. Smith, from whom she apparently took over this routine, for not only is this consistent with the reference to Mr. Smith above, but occasional staff lists confirm that he was the only person with the long continuity of service demonstrated by the handwriting evidence in the accessioons registers. By 1916 Miss Clark had virtually become the Librarian although she was not accorded the full title, for in that year the Director reported:

> "I beg to recommend that Miss Clark's wages be raised from 21s. to 25s. per week. Miss Clark has been at the Laboratory for some ten years and is now able to take practically entire charge of the Library, as well as of all the book-keeping." (46)

Miss Clark was to remain Librarian until her death in 1939 (47).

The evolution of library staffing has been a slight digression into the future, and it is necessary to return to the Library of 1888 and follow the development of its stock. Unfortunately no clues are given to the detailed organisation of the stock, but indications of the growth of the collections appear in the *Journal* and *Minutes*. In 1889 Mr. Spence Bate died, and the Director was authorised to spend as much as he thought necessary on buying books from the former's personal library (48); but apparently this action was not needed, for one year later the son of Mr. Spence Bate donated his father's large and valuable collection of books and pamphlets on Crustacea (49, 50).

In 1899 another collection of specialised literature, on Hydrozoa and Polyzoa, was purchased from the library of the late Rev. T. Hincks, followed by a donation of his pamphlets from his wife (51). Each year the Council appointed a committee to inspect the Plymouth Laboratory and their reports sometimes refer to the Library. As the result of such inspections the Director was ordered in 1894 to bind the periodicals which were in most constant use (52), and in 1896 to add *Journal of Morphology* and *Archiv fur Entwickelungsmechanik* to the list of periodical subscriptions (53). The Library was described in 1896:

> "The books are well cared for and arranged so as to be easy for reference. We found the card catalogue of the titles of memoirs efficient, and the library room convenient and comfortable." (54)

No evidence has been found to show the actual arrangement of the stock or the means of exploiting it; one can only speculate that there was probably free access to users and some form of self-service issue record.

The Library bookfund did not prove in practice to be as generous as originally intended and the amount of book purchases, binding, and serial subscriptions had to be carefully selected. The total expenditure 1886-1891 was £178 (55), after which the accounts show that the annual expenditure rose, with many fluctuations, from £25 in 1890-91 to £179 in 1913. The Association was not financially secure, and could not afford the originally estimated £100 p.a. bookfund. Most of the income came from a Treasury grant of £1,000, renewable annually, a subscription of about £400 p.a. from the Fishmongers' Company, annual subscriptions totalling about £100 -150 from members, a variable but comparatively small income from the rental of laboratory tables and, from 1890, admission fees charged to the public for viewing the Aquarium. From 1912 there was also a £500 p.a. grant from the newly established Board of Agriculture and Fisheries. The total income of the M.B.A. was far less than that of similar institutions elsewhere, and there was no certainty of renewal of the government grants. The Association had to keep within its immediate income, and the library bookfund depended on the general state of finance; for example, in 1895 the Director reported that:

> "It would be well if, as soon as possible, a sum of about £100 could be put aside for additions to the Library- but, considering the other extra expenses which have recently been necessary, it might be better ... to defer this ..." (56)

A few months later he proposed to consider an increase in the number of journals, "... on the supposition that the normal annual expenditure on the Library for all purposes shall be £70." (57) Despite the constraint on Library purchases the stock grew rapidly, particularly in the serials acquired mainly by exchange. In valuing the assets of the Association in 1894 the Library was valued at the considerable sum of £1,042. In 1896 it was reported that the collection of literature on sea fisheries was fairly complete, but that there were still many gaps in the literature dealing with scientific zoology and botany (58). Subsequently some important donations were received, including *Philosophical transactions 1857-1886* from Sir William Flower (59), Buffon's *Historie naturelle* from the Director of Kew Gardens (60), and Professor G. Retzius's donation of his own works (61). In August 1897 the Director again issued a desiderata list of 41 books and 23 runs of periodicals to fill gaps, stressing that:

> "Plymouth being so far from any of the larger libraries, it is most important that our own should be as complete as possible, and we shall be grateful to anyone who can help us to fill up deficiencies." (62)

The appeal was modestly successful, resulting in the donation by the Zoological Society of its publications from 1832, and a useful £20 from a Mr. Thomasson which was used to buy a much needed copy of Smitt's work on Scandinavian fishes (63). Through purchase, donation and exchange, the stock of the Library had increased to the extent that it was outgrowing its accommodation. New shelves were put up, covering the east wall of the room (64), and in 1899 an extra bookcase was obtained to house the Hinckes collection (65). By 1902 the stock was overflowing into the passage outside the Library, and some rearranement of stock was undertaken to improve access for quick reference (66).

Until 1902 the community of professional and serious amateur marine biologists using the Library was small, consisting of the immediate staff (Director, Naturalist, Director's Assistant), and perhaps between twelve and twenty independent researchers annually, plus such members of the M.B.A. as visited the Laboratory. In June 1902, however, the M.B.A. agreed to act as the British Government's agent for a ship taking part in the International Fisheries Investigation into marine biology of the North Sea (67). In order to carry out this work the M.B.A. established a centre at Lowestoft and the Director became responsible for it in addition to the normal running of the Plymouth

Laboratory; the extra resources which were provided included an initial separate budget of £5,500 p.m. and substantial staff increases. A separate library was established at the Lowestoft Laboratory; but as the nucleus was purchased in 1902 for less than £70 and the annual estimate for 1903/4 was £25 (68), it appears that only minimal provision was planned, with no intention of duplicating the larger resources at Plymouth. It seems likely that the International Fisheries Investigation Project had some effect on the Library at Plymouth, for it was at this time that priority was given to recataloguing the collection (vid. sup. p.431). Seven extra staff were appointed as part of the new Project, but in 1910 the work was transferred to the newly established Board of Agriculture and Fisheries, leaving the M.B.A. with the Director and three professional staff. The latter promptly left - one with Scott's Antarctic Expedition, one to teach at Plymouth Technical Schools, and one resigned through ill health (69). The Director had to rebuild his team, which by 1914 consisted of six professionals, laboratory assistants, the clerk/librarian, and the caretaker (70). This does not suggest that the Library was intensively used by staff, and other users were not often more than about twenty or more naturalists using the laboratory tables. However, the Library was obviously much appreciated, particularly by visitors from overseas of whom there were usually one to three each year, from the major fishing countries of Europe and elsewhere - Japan, Russia, New Zealand, India, South Africa, and U.S.A. Many of these overseas visitors contributed usefully to the development of the Library's stock by donating copies of their own papers and other works; for example, Professor Loeb from California donated 39 papers in 1910, and in the same year Messrs. Richter and Regan donated 16 and 18 papers respectively. Nor did the British members and staff neglect the Library. The accessions records show occasional donations from members of Council such as Professor Lankester, E.T. Browne and Dr. Harmer, all of whom also gave or bequeathed important portions of their personal libraries to the M.B.A. in the post-1914 period. Mr. W.I. Beaumont left 45 works in 1912, and Mr. G.H. Drew left a bequest of about 70 books in 1913.

It has already been shown that from the beginning the Library benefitted from the exchange of publications, and this provided a very significant proportion of its accessions. In 1912 about 1,200 items

were added, of which about 66% was serial parts and nearly 20% papers. Only about 30% of the additions had been acquired through purchase; about 28% were donated items, and over 40% was acquired through exchange, on a world-wide basis. Countries and states involved in the exchange arrangements included: U.S.A., France, Germany, Italy, Russia, Norway, Australia, Japan, Philippines, Ceylon and Madras.

Probably the most difficult library problem in the early years of the twentieth century was that of accommodation. In 1908 the Visiting Committee reported:

> "With the growth of the Library, the space for books and stores on the second floor is becoming very limited. As a temporary measure, we recommend that two shelves, each about twenty four feet long, be fixed over the doors of the lavatory, museum, lift and roof, to take such books as are in less frequent demand." (70)

They recognised that more drastic measures would shortly be required, and recommended reorganisation to enable sliding iron bookshelves of the British Museum type to be installed in the area then occupied by the lavatory. Two years later, another Visiting Committee repeated the warning of the approaching crisis:

> "Owing to the satisfactory growth of the Library, additional accommodation for books will shortly be required, and we have made a few simple suggestions for the extra shelving." (71)

Nothing could solve the Library's problem until the general problem of insufficient space throughout the Laboratory was resolved. Plans were put forward for new laboratories in 1911 (72) which would release space for the Library to extend on its existing floor, but financial problems and the advent of war in 1914 postponed that solution. The lucky chance of £50 extra bookfund in 1911 was used to buy recent books on experimental biology, biochemistry and invertebrate physiology (73) but aggravated the accommodation problem! For the time being, shelves were provided in the Director's Office to store the Library overflow, which was most inconvenient because of its location in the East Wing and on a different level (74).

The amalgamation of the Three Towns in 1914 had no effect on the M.B.A. Library for it was not dependent upon local factors. The Library seems to have remained fairly static upon the outbreak of World War I, and the loss of members of staff who were called up possibly accelerated the emergence of Miss Clark as Librarian. In

its thirty years of existence the Library had achieved the most comprehensive collection of literature on fisheries in the country and shared the M.B.A.'s growing international reputation. It was nevertheless in the post-1918 period that it was to experience its main period of development and expansion which would convert it nearly one century after its foundation into a library occupying three floors, containing 12,500 books, 37,000 bound volumes of periodicals, over 60,000 pamphlets and reprints, and nearly 1,500 current serials (75). Yet, even in the modern library, the solid foundations of the 1884-1914 period can still be seen in its stock.

9.2 MEDICAL LIBRARIES : a general introduction

Very little is known about the medical history of Plymouth, the oldest of the Three Towns, in the medieval period. There was a leper hospital, which probably existed from the fourteenth-century and is likely to have been connected with one of the Orders of Friars which settled in the town. It was probably the friars, too, who tended the sick and wounded soldiers and seamen who returned to the town after the military expeditions to France, for medical and surgical treatment was effectively the monopoly of the monastic orders. The townsfolk were liable to suffer not only the usual accidents and hazards of the time, but were particularly vulnerable to epidemics often brought back from foreign parts. Probably the majority of people had to depend upon their own resources of herbal preparations and superstitious remedies, but there is a single reference to a general hospital of Mary the Blessed Virgin which opened in 1501. No trace of medical books has been found relating to the pre-Reformation period ; effectively the medical history of the Three Towns begins in the late sixteenth century, from which time references occur to medical men, the earliest apparently being an unnamed surgeon mentioned in the Corporation Accounts for 1575 (76), and the earliest named being a surgeon, James Capon, in 1589 (77). Although the many epidemics of the plague at Plymouth in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth-centuries must have shown the obvious need for medical men there, the fact that the place was a port was a considerable drawback. In the most severe epidemic of 1625-6 the Mayor had to petition the Privy Council to exempt the surgeons Frederick Christian and John Davies from the pressgang, "no Surgeons having come to the town for fear of the Press (78). During the height of the epidemic in July 1626 Dr. Dunbar, possibly the only physician in the town, was among the 272 deaths for that month (79). From about 1650 onwards there are frequent references to physicians and surgeons. The professional medical men in the town at any time did not only include civilians, but growing numbers of naval medical officers, for surgeons were being appointed to the larger vessels and a physician was appointed to each Fleet. The Dockyard at Devonport, being an Admiralty establishment, had its own Surgeon from the beginning in 1690. The Army, too, began to appoint its own medical officers.

It is relevant to notice at this point that the professional

education and training of physicians and surgeons differed. A physician held a medical degree, by virtue of which he was allowed to practice anywhere in the realm; until the eighteenth-century the degree was acquired mainly from Oxford and Cambridge, or in a continental medical school such as that of Leyden. From the mid-eighteenth-century the Faculty of Medicine at Edinburgh gained a high reputation, and over the next hundred years medical education in Britain became organised on more modern lines, with revised syllabi incorporating the rising tide of new medical knowledge and sweeping away the traditional classical and medieval authorities; medical schools were established in connection with newly founded voluntary hospitals, English began to replace Latin as the medium of medical communication, and a uniting medical profession began to impose recognised standards and formal examinations. The physician's training was largely an academic one which involved a considerable knowledge of medical literature and involved him in using medical libraries such as the superior facilities at Edinburgh University. A surgeon, by contrast, became qualified through a seven year apprenticeship in which he gained the practical knowledge of his trade, particularly dealing with accidents and diseases of the bone structure and external complaints which were his main province. After completing his apprenticeship, the surgeon had to be licensed by the Royal College of Surgeons, and, unlike physicians, had also to be licensed by the Bishop of the Diocese in which he proposed to practice. A surgeon could make the transition to becoming a physician by acquiring an M.D., which was not necessarily difficult up to about 1800 as not every university insisted on the residential study and examination standards set by Edinburgh University; at St. Andrew's, for example, an M.D. could be obtained by recommendation. Exceptionally, a seventeenth-century surgeon of Plymouth, James Yonge, achieved such a high professional reputation that he was invited by the London College of Physicians to become a physician on the strength of his reputation and a brief oral examination.

In view of the different education and training of physicians and surgeons, it is not surprising to find more traces of substantial personal libraries among physicians than among surgeons. Sangwine has shown how the private libraries of Tudor doctors contained works trending towards an increasing rationality, combining their sober regard for tradition with a receptivity to new ideas (80), and the early

seventeenth-century libraries of the local physicians Richard Isteed, John Nicholls and Richard Peryam (vid. sup. Chapter 3) were probably of the same kind. The private library of James Yonge was probably gained mainly while he was a surgeon, but he was an exceptional surgeon who turned physician, and his library appears to have been representative of the modern medicine of his period. The private medical libraries which have been found in the two large medical libraries studied in the following sections were the libraries of physicians, not surgeons; the medical books of Dr. Remmett were donated to the Plymouth Medical Society, and the Royal Naval Hospital Medical Library contains the remants of the professional libraries of the naval medical officers Drs. Gillespie, McKinnal and Dickson. It appears, too, from the local findings, that it was the academically trained physicians who played more prominent parts in the organisation of local medical book clubs and libraries, although the surgeons seem to have formed the majority of members.

The number of professional medical men in the Three Towns grew rapidly in the late eighteenth and the nineteenth-century, because of the growth in the total population, the establishment of civilian and service hospitals, and the movements of the Armed Services. The *Medical register 1779* records four physicians and ten surgeons for the Three Towns (81); a local directory of 1784 shows five and seventeen respectively (82). By 1857 the numbers had increased to 16 physicians and 54 surgeons (including 7 R.N.), with others resident in adjacent areas such as Stoke residential village which boasted 13 surgeons of whom 5 were naval surgeons (83). The official Census figures for 1861 show 12 physicians and 78 surgeons, but these figures include medical officers of naval ships in port who happened to be ashore on the night of the Census. In 1871 the total of professional medical men was 86. Apart from their personal libraries, what medical library facilities existed for this growing number of medical men? Briefly, there were two libraries, one a medical society library, and the other a medical library in a hospital. The background to each of these types of library will be reviewed next.

The spirit of scientific enquiry which began to rise in the seventeenth-century, fostered by the Royal Society and its *Philosophical transactions* which covered all scientific fields, rapidly gave rise to

increasingly specialised developments, including the field of medicine. The eighteenth-century saw an increase in the number of medical societies which, although founded under varying circumstances, generally had in common the aim of spreading current knowledge and discussing problems, leading in turn to the further progress of medical science and the development of specialisation within it. Libraries were often established as important aids, and works of eighteenth-century authors such as Morgagni, Cheselden, Pott, John Hunter, Boerhaave, Baillie, and others now took their place on bookshelves alongside Hippocrates, Galen and other classical or medieval Latin texts. Several British medical periodicals appeared, many short-lived. This rising tide of medical literature, coupled with the high price of books, made the idea of joint purchase attractive; and it is in this context that the Plymouth Medical Society was founded in 1794, with the maintenance of a library as one of its main aims. Not only was this the first medical society in its region (Exeter Medical Society was formed in 1814), but it was one of the earliest provincial medical societies; and in the course of the research into the history of its Library, the author has come to the conclusion that there are grounds for claiming it to be the first amongst the provincial societies to establish a library. It depends upon how "medical society" is interpreted, and upon the way in which the date of origin is established. Shaw (84) studied the medical societies of Great Britain which were established before 1850; he excluded from his study those societies which did not meet for the advancement of knowledge, such as medical dining clubs, social medical societies, medical book clubs, etc. He also excluded those societies which were medical licensing bodies. In his chronologies, the earliest medical societies worthy of the name, i.e. which met to advance knowledge, were: in Scotland, 1737 Royal Medical Society of Edinburgh, and 1789 Aberdeen Medico-Chirurgical Society; in London, 1773 the Medical Society of London; and in the English provinces, 1774 Colchester Medical Society and 1794 Plymouth Medical Society. Ratcliffe has studied the Colchester Medical Society (85); the earliest minute books are lost, but he found that the original members were from different towns in Essex and Suffolk and that although one of their earliest objects was to form a library, it was more of a circulating book club than a permanent collection, probably because of the difficulty of finding a place to store the books; it was not until 1843 that this Society started a permanent library, by subscribing for the Sydenham Society

publications, and only in 1855 did they elect the first Library Committee. This was long after Plymouth had acquired a sizeable collection, as will be shown in the history of the Plymouth Medical Society, and in this particular context Plymouth could be argued to have the earliest medical library amongst societies of its type in England. Other authors have taken a less stringent attitude towards their definitions of medical societies, and in the wider context there are earlier medical libraries in provincial medical societies, notably Liverpool Medical Society which was founded in about 1770 with the primary object of the cooperative purchase of books (86). The different criteria used by authorities in this field of medical history, such as Rolleston (87), Power (88) and Thornton (89) make it impossible to extract a comparative ranking of the Plymouth Medical Society, but what does seem to emerge is that there is general agreement that it was one of the earliest provincial medical societies, and the author's enquiries into the state of survival and location of the libraries of earlier societies suggests that the Plymouth Medical Society can pride itself on being the oldest society retaining the remnants of its library in its own possession. Furthermore, the Society has the advantage that it retains some archives including the first minute book, so that some details are available about the foundation and growth of the Library. It is believed that the following study of the Plymouth Medical Society is the first professional examination of its history, and might consequently be of interest not only to local historians, but also to medical library historians.

Traces of other local medical societies have been found, viz. the Western Medical and Chirurgical Society, established 1824, the Devonport Medical Society (fl. 1838), and the Plymouth Devonport and Stonehouse Medical Reading Society (fl. 1849). They appear to have been of much less importance than the Plymouth Medical Society, and did not generate much in the way of book collections, but have been grouped for presentation in section 9.5.

The second library, which was available to naval medical men, was the Medical Library of the Royal Naval Hospital at Stonehouse. It seems, however, that the Plymouth Medical Society Library was closely associated with the Plymouth hospitals and was capable of being used for reference by a wider community than the Society, so the history

of the hospitals of the Three Towns will be outlined to put these two libraries in focus.

In Plymouth the civilian hospitals are of comparatively late origin. Although there was some provision of institutional care for the sick from at least the late seventeenth-century, plus the earlier workhouse hospital ward, the first real hospital was established in 1798 as the local manifestation of the great voluntary hospital movement of the eighteenth-century. This was the Public Dispensary, which at first took only out-patients, but soon acquired a site and built wards which opened in 1809. This hospital was so successful that expansion became necessary, leading directly to the establishment in 1835 of the South Devon and East Cornwall Hospital on a site in the centre of Plymouth. In 1884 it transferred to a new site on the outskirts of the centre, at Greenbank; it became known as Greenbank Hospital, and has since then expanded considerably on the site. The Library of the Plymouth Medical Society was accommodated in the Public Dispensary in 1817, and transferred with the latter to its later sites,presumably providing a reference facility to the hospital medical staff generally, although this is not explicit in the early years. In 1892 the Library and the Society had outgrown its accommodation, and moved away from the Hospital; the latter seems to have made no attempt at that time to set up a replacement library. In 1946 the Plymouth Medical Society Library moved back into the Hospital, and eventually its newest stock became the foundation collection of the modern Hospital Medical Library.

Several specialist hospitals were established in or around Plymouth before 1914. They include: the Royal Eye Infirmary, established 1821; the Workhouse Infirmary, which moved to a site near Freedom Park in 1849 and later became the City Hospital; Plymouth Borough Asylum near Ugborough, in 1891; 1892 Mount Gould Hospital for infectious diseases, and 1892 Pearn Convalescent Home. The only library provision discovered among them which was prior to 1914 was the location of the Western Medical and Chirurgical Society Library in the Royal Eye Infirmary for an unknown period. The Borough Library lent some old volumes of magazinesto the Workhouse Infirmary, as mentioned in Chapter 7, but this was clearly for the patients, not the medical staff.

At Devonport the hospital development roughly paralleled that of Plymouth. Dock had six resident surgeons in 1783 and its first resident physician in 1808. The total population was larger than Plymouth, but medical responsibility was shared with the Dockyard and Armed Services. It was not until 1815 that the Dock Public Dispensary was established, and from it evolved the Royal Albert Hospital, opened 1863. The Admiralty contributed to the upkeep of the Hospital, and in 1914 had taken over its Lock Wards, which were used for a variety of purposes and ended up with housing the Port Library. However, no trace of any library has been found in the pre-1914 period.

The medical history of Stonehouse is particularly bound up with the establishment of the Royal Naval Hospital there in 1763. The Hospital contains a collection of old medical books, some of which were published long before 1763, and until this research was undertaken the origin of this old Medical Library was completely unknown although it seemed unlikely that it could antedate the Hospital. It has now been shown by the author that this Medical Library was established by the Medical Department of the Navy in 1825, and this must mean that the Library was among the earliest hospital medical libraries established outside of the teaching hospitals, although its chronological ranking is not clear; the standard works on hospital history and library history do not seem to have attempted this particular comparison, and it probably awaits much more research into individual major hospitals before any definiteconclusions can be reached. Once again, however, it is the first time that there has been professional research into the history of this Medical Library, and the findings reveal some information which adds to the knowledge of not only hospital medical libraries in general but the little known naval medical libraries in particular.

The Military Hospital was built in 1797 on the opposite side of Stonehouse Creek to the Royal Naval Hospital, but was not staffed regularly, only in time of war. The Royal Naval Hospital supplied both it and the Dockyard with drugs and medicines, No library provision seems to be associated with it.

9.3 PLYMOUTH MEDICAL SOCIETY

9.3.1 The origin and establishment of the Society and its Library

On 11 April 1794 twelve medical men from the Three Towns met for dinner at the Globe Hotel in Plymouth to discuss the setting up of a medical society. Two weeks later, nine of the met again to confirm the *Rules and regulations* which they had devised at the first meeting, and by the end of June all twelve founder members had paid their first subscription of 10s. 6d. (90). Two members were physicians, Dr. R.B. Remmett and Dr. Samuel Pett, and ten were surgeons. Seven lived and practised in Plymouth, four in Devonport, and one in Stonehouse, so professional considerations had outweighed the political rivalries of the individual Three Towns. The membership represented about half of the recorded surgeons and physicians practising in the Three Towns at that date, including some from the Royal Naval Hospital (91).

The events leading up to the establishment of the Society are not recorded, but it is known that it was difficult to obtain professional literature through the booksellers in the Three Towns even after 1800, and the rapid development of medical science was resulting in many new medical publications with which practitioners needed to keep abreast. It is not hard to imagine the contrast experienced by someone like young Dr. Pett, fresh from Edinburgh University and used to its excellent medical libraries, when he settled in Plymouth; there was not even a géneral library, for the Plymouth Public Library and the Plymouth Institution were still at least fifteen years in the future. The principles of subscription libraries in the form of book clubs and private subscription libraries had been widely established in the country, and the two physicians at least were accustomed to paying subscriptions to use the medical library at the University of Edinburgh, to which all students had to pay 2s. 6d. annually. Medical libraries were in existence in some medical schools attached to teaching hospitals too, and there were also the long established libraries of the Royal Colleges. In these circumstances it is not strange to find the local application of the wider experience, and the formation of one of the earliest provincial medical societies. It is a tradition of the Society that it originated at the suggestion of Samuel Fuge, a wellknown local surgeon, but it was Dr. Robert Butler Remmett who was responsible for its

successful establishment and became known as "the Father of the Society" (92). Dr. Remmett was the Society's only Officer until 1800, and was President until his death in 1823. One possible reason for his active leadership might have been that, although the concept of a bookclub was likely to occur to any practitioner, he was probably the most experienced of the local medical men in exploiting medical literature, partly through his knowledge of the Edinburgh medical libraries and the Edinburgh Medical Society of which he was a member since 1772, and probably partly also because he had twenty years of professional practice and must have been one of the senior medical men of the Three Towns. It seems possible, too, that the formation of the Society might have been spurred on in some way by the young Dr. Samuel Pett who had graduated at Edinburgh as recently as 24 June 1793. Although there is no mention of such a contribution in the official records, it is interesting to find that when Dr. Pett left the Three Towns in 1796 he was unanimously declared an "Extraordinary Member" (a category which was officially non-existent), which suggests that his unrecorded contribution to the Society must have been appreciated by the members.

The first set of *Rules and regulations* (93)do not explicitly state the purpose of the Society, but the paramount object was clearly to obtain and circulate medical literature, for nine of the thirteen rules were concerned with that subject. The first clear statement of the aims of the Society does not occur until 1841, when it is recorded in the Introduction to the revised *Laws* that:

> "The Society was intended to promote a friendly intercourse and good feeling amongst its members, and to diffuse useful information by the circulation of Books in Medicine and the Sciences connected with it." (94)

Certainly it has been mainly the social element, particularly the sumptuous dinners, which has tended to be recounted in the brief outlines of the Society's history which it has published, but the original *Rules and regulations* set the emphasis not on the social side but the serious purpose of obtaining medical literature. Some of the individual rules were destined to operate for a long time. Four of them dealt with membership, structure and subscriptions. Membership was to be limited to fifteen, meeting monthly "on the Friday nearest to every full Moon", at seven o'clock, at the house of each member in turn, "where all business relative to the Society shall be transacted." When vacancies occurred in the membership, candidates had to be ballotted for twice,

once to determine their eligibility (which had to be approved unanimously) and then by a simple majority to decide between eligible candidates. Only one Officer was appointed, the Treasurer, whose duty was:

> "... to receive subscriptions and fees, and to keep an Account of all monies received and disbursed and a Catalogue of all books ordered ..."

Every new member had to pay an admission fee of "such sum as shall be thought reasonable by the Society" and a subscription of 10s. 6d. half yearly thereafter. The founder-members did not pay an admission fee, and the first admission fee which was recorded in the Treasurer's Book was on 9 June 1797, when William Woollcombe was elected and paid one guinea admission and 10s. 6d. subscription.

The remaining nine rules related to book provision, and suggest that at least one of the members had either personal experience of a book club or had seen the rules of one. The policy of book selection was clearly stated to "be confined to such books as are written on Medicine and the Sciences connected with it; ..." and this policy has remained unchanged ever since then. The books were to be selected by a majority of the members at a general meeting; and this arrangement continued for over one hundred years, until 1904 when there was some re-organisation and the power of decision was transferred to a majority of the Council. All new books were first to be sent to the Treasurer, "who shall write on, or affix to each the order of circulation, putting each member in turn at the head of the list, and shall, at his own discretion, mention also the time each book may be kept." Each member had to note carefully the time he forwarded the book, and fines were payable for overdue retention: up to two days, 6d., 2 to 7 days 1s., 1 - 2 weeks 2s., over two weeks 2s. and the original value of the book. Two days were allowed for books to pass between Plymouth and Plymouth Dock. Each member had to report at every meeting the titles of the books he had in his possession, on pain of 1s. fine. If a volume was lost or damaged, the member concerned had to pay the original price, and if it was a volume of a set, paid the original value of the set, taking the odd volumes for himself. After the books had been circulated they were to be returned to the Treasurer "who shall be answerable for them." Any member could have a second reading, "but shall not then keep any book longer than double the times first allowed, if it happens to be wanted by any other member." Once a year there was to be an auction of the books the Society did not wish to retain, and the items to be

sold were to be decided by the Society at a preceeding meeting. It appears from this last rule that the Society clearly envisaged that it would build up a reserve of the more important books after they had been circulated, although it was probably not envisaged as a large library at that date, and the Society had the general appearance of a bookclub which specialised in medicine.

9.3.2 The early years 1794 - 1817

A number of amendments to the rules and organisation of the Society took place in the early years as it began to consolidate and develop. Dr. Remmett evidently gave it firm guidance. He had been elected Treasurer in 1794 and apparently remained unopposed at the annual elections. Effectively, although he was called Treasurer, he was also undertaking responsibilities of President, Librarian and Secretary, and an early development was the devolution of work by the establishment of other posts. The first of these was the post of Librarian:

> "Dr. Remmett having resigned that part of the office of the Treasurer which respects the care and management of the books, Dr. Woollcombe was this day elected Librarian to the Society." (95)

The devolution continued, with the first Secretary being appointed in 1807 and the diminished office of Treasurer in 1809, leaving Dr. Remmett with the office of President until his death in 1823 (after which the host for the evening presided until the office of President was re-established in 1869). In 1802 it was felt that the Society was sufficiently established and members acquainted to reduce the frequency of the meetings from monthly to quarterly.

The bookstock was small in these early years, and reached only about 400 volumes by 1817 (96). The volumes were apparently kept at the home first of Dr. Remmett and then of Dr. Woollcombe. There were no overhead expenses, and the whole of the Society's income could be applied to book purchase. The income from subscriptions and occasional entrance fees were at first usefully supplemented by fines and the income from the sale of books. Fines, however, did not appear to have been an adequate penalty to safeguard the rapid circulation of books; for in 1811 it was resolved that the subsisting regulations "respecting the circulation of books were inadequate to its being

effected regularly" and a committee was appointed " to consider of such regulations as shall be more calculated to produce the object in view." (97) The Committee produced a plan, of which details are unknown, but the Society rejected it as the plan would have caused "more inconvenience than would be counterbalanced by other important considerations." (98) The rule regarding fines was repealed in 1812 except in respect of reviews and periodical publications (99), when it was also determined that the Secretary should report undue retention of books, and the members would decide on the penalty. It is not clear what the penalties were, but they were evidently no longer financial. No income from fines appears in the Treasurer's Book after the 5s. from fines in 1814-5, but it was not until 1841 that a new rule on the subject embodied the decision of 1812:

> "In as much as no fines are imposed for the neglect of any of the foregoing regulations, the Society holds every Member and Associate bound in honour to observe them." (100)

The early income from the sale of books resulted in a few shillings extra per annum until 1803, after which it ceased until 1818 when the small sum of 1s. 6d. was recorded from that source, appearing only occasionally thereafter until 1839 when sales were again implemented for a few years. This suggests that perhaps a more positive policy was being adopted towards the building up of a permanent library at the end of the first five years, and this is strengthened by the decision in 1797 to bind some volumes with the evident intention of preservation, and the appointment in 1800 of the Librarian.

The majority of early purchases seem to have been books, which were obtained via the main local booksellers including Haydon, Richards, Rees & Curtis, and Nettleton (101). The payments made for "books" probably soon began to include periodicals, the first reference to one by title being *Desault's journal* on 3 April 1795. The reference to periodicals and reviews in the 1812 decision to repeal fines suggests that there were several subscriptions, but no others were mentioned by title. The 1841 *Catalogue* shows that the earliest periodical runs then extant, and possibly acquired by subscriptions from their initial dates were: *1792-1805 Memoirs of the Medical Society of London, 1793 Transactions of the College of Physicians of Philadelphia, 1793 Transactions of the Society for the Improvement of Medical and Chirurgical Knowledge, 1794-1804 Medical review, 1796-1804 Annals of medicine, 1799-1833 Medical and physical journal, 1800-1840 Philosophical trans-*

actions of the Royal Society. The Treasurer's Book shows that by 1822 the following periodicals were being taken regularly, at a total annual cost of about £8. 10.0., roughly one half of the annual income: *Medical journal, Medical intelligence, Journal of foreign medicine, Medical-chirurgical journal, Edinburgh medical journal, Philosophical transactions* and *Johnson's journal.*

The Librarian's duties in these early years were unclear, but seem to have been minimal. The Treasurer ordered books and journals; the Secretary was responsible for circulating them; the Librarian was apparently in charge of the growing collection of works which had been circulated to each member in turn and were accumulating into a nucleus of a permanent library (103).

9.3.3. Consolidation and growth 1817 - 1869

By 1817 the Library had grown to about 400 volumes and the Society needed suitable accommodation from which this useful collection could be easily accessible. Several members of the Society had been influentially involved in the establishment of the new Public Dispensary, which seemed an obvious choice of location. The Governors' permission was obtained, a bookcase was purchased for £14.1.6., and the books were transported to their new rent-free accommodation in the Committee Room of the Dispensary, where the Society held its first meeting on 17 February 1817 (104). The care of the books was entrusted to the Matron, Mrs. Edgeland, and the Society incurred its first overhead expenditure by paying her a gratuity of one guinea per annum for her services in issuing and receiving the books. At this time, too, two copies of a catalogue were made by an unknown Mr. Jacks, who was paid 10s. 6d. for his labour (105). The books which had completed their circulation to members and were lodged in this Library became known as the Shelf Books to distinguish them from more recent purchases, and the collection was destined to grow to some 2,000 volumes by 1870.

The desirability of extending the Society's useful medical collection to other practitioners had probably been one of the reasons for moving it to the Dispensary; for although full membership continued to be held to a maximum of fifteen, in 1817 a new category of members was established, the Extraordinary Members, who in 1826 changed their

designation to Associates. Until 1836 a limit was placed on the number of Associates, 12 in 1822, and 16 in 1822. Associates paid an admission fee and an annual subscription, which permitted them to have free access to the Library and to receive the periodicals and new books in course of circulation. They also had an opportunity to recommend new titles to be purchased, but had to do this via a Member or the Secretary, as only Members attended the meetings and took the business decisions. In 1851 an Associate resigned, giving as his reason that "the Works in circulation during the past year have contained so little of professional interest", to which the Secretary replied that he regretted that the member concerned

> "... had not oftener used the opportunity afforded him of naming works he wished to see, which might have proved more interesting to him and useful to others." (106)

By the end of the 1820s the Society was operating on clear proprietary principles. The Members paid an entrance fee of £5 for a share in the property, and the share was purchased back from them at the same sum if the Member left the Society; as proprietors, the Members took all of the Society's management decisions, at their regular quarterly meetings. The Associates had a normal subscriber's facility of using the Library and receiving the new books and journals, for which the entrance fee was two guineas and the annual subscription £1, until 1831 when the annual subscription was raised to thirty shillings (107). The Society never owned premises, so its entire property never consisted of more than the books, book-cases, and a few portraits plus some oddments; so although the Members were proprietors, the arrangements were rather less formal than those of the Plymouth Public Library and Devonport Public Library which had now been established as proprietary libraries.

The increase in total membership from 1817 onwards made it necessary to review and amend the circulation arrangements for new books and periodicals from time to time. In particular, it became necessary to duplicate some of the more important periodicals, which account for the recommencement of occasional auctions for a few years from 1839. Some circulation registers survive from 1836, showing how this service operated. Separate circulation lists were maintained for Members and Associates, and within each list there was a further subdivision into books and periodicals. Most Members and Associates had their names on the circulation lists for both books and periodicals, but a few appear to have been interested in only books or periodicals and not both.

Each circulation group contained between twelve and fifteen names, and it could take months for items to reach the last person on the list. The Secretary continued to assign appropriate maximum periods for each individual reader to retain an item, and some examples for 1825 were quoted on the occasion of the Secretary reporting a serious defaulter (108): vols. 3 & 4 of *Lancet* 6 days, issues nos. 3-6 of *Lancet* 3 days, and *Edinburgh journal* 6 days. The first few entries in the circulation ledger for 1836 shows the time it took for the items to complete their circulation of not more than fifteen readers, and the dates of return suggest that there had been a build-up instead of an even flow of items:

Medical gazette no. 430 & Lancet no. 652	sent 1.3.1836	returned 6.7.1836
" " *431* " *653*	7.3.1836	6.7.1836
" " *432* " *654*	14.3.1836	6.7.1836
Belinaye *on the sources of health and disease*	9.3.1836	23.3.1837
Cross *on urinary calculus*	9.3.1836	22.9.1836
Williams *Pathology & diagnoses of diseases of the chest*	23.3.1836	22.9.1836

In the early years Dr. Remmett had the right to see each item first, and he retained this privilege until his death. After he had seen the item, it was circulated first among the Plymouth members and then amongst those at Dock. In 1820 it was agreed that it would be fairer to start the circulation in Dock in alternate years (109), starting in 1821. In 1834 it was agreed that in the circulation of periodicals, the names of the Members and Asssociates should come to the top of the list in rotation; this had been stipulated in the original rules of 1794, but had apparently been discontinued (110). It might have been expected that the removal of the limitation on numbers of Associates in 1836 would have resulted in a surge of new Associates, but this did not materialise, probably because of the existence of the other little-known medical societies which had been established, such as the Devonport and Stonehouse Medical Society which might have been some form of reaction to the inconvenient distance of the Library and the difficulties of circulation being experienced in the Plymouth Medical Society. The number of Associates declined, and by 1853 was considered to be small enough to amalgamate the list of Members and Associates and cancel the duplication of journals (111).

The Library of "stock books" grew by the addition of donations

as well as the circulated items. The most notable addition by donation was probably the medical library of Dr. Remmett; he died in 1823, and his son donated about 160 volumes from his father's library to the Society, which recorded in the minutes - with marked lack of enthusiasm -

> "Resolved that the Society duly appreciates the present made by Dr. Remmett of a collection of old medical works late the property of his father ..." (112)

It looks as though the son, himself a physician, kept the most modern works, and gave the Society the unwanted works which had been the basic education of a physician when old Dr. Remmett studied medicine in the 1770s, a time when examinations were still conducted in Latin, and it was still usual to include a study of Hippocrates and Galen etc. with the more modern medical works. Many of the donated works were in Latin, and the total of 115 works in 176 volumes was not of much interest to the Society which was formed to keep abreast of modern medicine, not to study medical history. Consequently, although Remmett's books were catalogued in the 1841 published *Catalogue*, they were not as fully described as the other items; they were the only ones of which the publication dates were excluded. Ironically, the only surviving book from this despised or unwanted Remmett donation is Boyle's *Sceptical chemist*, which is the most valuable of the Society's books and, if sold, would provide the money to repair the other books which need much attention! Other donations made to the Society's Library were given by members such as Charles Yonge's 29 volumes in 1841 (113), and H. Fortescue in 1840 (114). In 1842 Plymouth Public Library presented Farren's *Observations on the rules and laws of mortality among Europeans*, probably because of its policy to exclude purely professional literature; this gesture returned the compliment paid to it in 1813 when the Society presented 34 volumes of Griselle's *L'Histoire des inscriptions* which evidently fell outside its own policy of acquiring medical and related scientific works.

In 1831 the Society began to employ a porter to convey stock books from one member to another, which evidently improved the service but added to the overhead costs of the organisation, although the increase in the same year of the Associates' subscriptions from £1 to £1.10.0 helped to offset the extra expense. In 1841 George Davis was paid £5 for the charge of the Society's Library and for acting as porter in circulating the books and delivering notices, etc. Nevertheless, the expenditure on books and periodicals remained a high percentage of the

total expenditure. In 1854, for example, the total income was £30.17.6 of which £22.3.4 was spent on books and periodicals. The following year the income was £24.15.0, of which £13.8.4 was spent on books and periodicals, £5.5.0 on the porter's salary, one guinea each as subscriptions to the Sydenham Society, Provincial Medical Association, Medical Benevolent Fund, printing 10s. 8d., sundries 3s. 6d., leaving a net profit of £2. 4. 6. for the year.

The earliest reference to a catalogue seems to be the 1817 payment for two manuscript copies, referred to earlier. The bundle of financial vouchers in the Society's archives revealed that in 1825 a catalogue had been printed, fifty copies of 88 pages Demo 8vo., at a total cost of £16 plus £1.5.0. for binding them in a printed wrapper (115). Unfortunately none seem to have survived. The earliest extant *Catalogue* is the 1841 edition. It consists of an alphabetical listing by authors' names, and the individual entries consist of author, short title, number of volumes, format, and date of publication (except Dr. Remmett's books). The edition of a work is rarely stated, and serials are entered under title. The Library contained 41 volumes of tracts, the contents of which appear twice, in the author listing and in a systematic entry under the heading "Tracts". An analysis of this *Catalogue* has revealed that the Library contained 890 works, of which 32 were periodicals and 174 were tracts; there were 1,360 volumes, of which 414 were periodicals and 43 tracts. The subject coverage shows that the policy of acquiring only works on medicine and connected sciences had been strictly observed. The collection consisted mainly of medical and surgical literature in which the main branches known at that period were represented; the other material consisted mainly of a few works on chemistry, medical botany and medical jurisprudence, with an occasional unexpected item, such as the *Memoirs of the Literary Society of Manchester 1805*, which was probably donated.

The copy of the 1841 *Catalogue* which has survived is an interleaved one which appears to have been kept in the Library and up-dated by manuscript entries. It has also been annotated in the margins with locations for nearly 90% of the entries. This information has been extracted and analysed, and the information on format has been treated similarly. By combining the information yielded by these analyses it has been possible to reconstruct an outline of the stock arrangement

as it must have appeared on the Library shelves in 1841. Table 37 shows the outline, in which the subjects listed against each shelf represent the keywords of the book titles assigned to that location, The following description will need to be read in conjunction with the outline chart. There appear to have been two groups of bookcases. In the first group there were five bookcases, A, E, I, O, U, each with eight shelves, a - h, above cupboard bases which were identified as AA, EE, II, OO, UU, followed by lower case letters denoting shelves; the number of shelves in the cupboards seem to have varied, probably according to whether the contents were large folios of plates or octavo periodicals. The second group were bookcases W, X, Y and Z, which appear to have had up to eight shelves each, and either had no cupboards or the cupboards were not available for Library use - they were, after all, located in the Committee Room of the Dispensary, although the two groups of bookcases does suggest that one group might have been in another location in the same building. Bookcases W - Z held mainly tracts and periodicals.

The format of 80% of the stock was octavo, and the remaining 20% was made up of 5% 12mo or smaller, 2½% folio, and 12½% quartos. The largest works were mainly anatomical plates and other illustrations. When new books were added to the Library, it appears that the unusually large or small items were placed, regardless of subject, into the appropriate shelf for that size. Shelf Aa held 12mos. and smaller, double or triple-banked to judge by the number, overflowing to the adjacent shelves Ea and Ab, and eventually into Ob also. Quartos were concentrated on shelves g and h of bookcases A, I and O, and also in the lower cupboards of I and O. Some folios were shelved with the quartos, but others were concentrated in Oh and on the lower cupboard shelves IIc and OOc. The tracts were all shelved in Wa - Wc, each volume being bound when a sufficient quantity of pamphlet material had accumulated regardless of subject or date. Serials occurred in each cupboard, but particularly in AA and UU; most of bookcase U and the whole of X and Z also contained periodicals. The remaining shelves held the general medical and surgical works, mostly in octavo format, and apparently broadly arranged by subject although some miscellaneous works usually occupy the same shelves. The works of Boerhaave were kept together in Oa, overflowing to Ob, and the multi-volume *Cyclopaedia of practical surgery* in AAf. Users could apparently find

Table 37 Plymouth Medical Society Library: outline of the arrangement of bookstock in 1841.

	CASES	A	E	I	O	U	W	X	Y	Z
SHELVES	a	12 mo.	12 mo.		Boer ~~Leave~~ haave	Serials	Tracts	Serials	Electricity Phrenology	Dictionary Serials
	b	12 mo. Rectum Venereal		Fever	Physiology Medical Practice	Chemistry	Tracts	Serials	Misc.	Serials
	c	Rectum Venereal	Stomach Digestion			Climate, atmosphere	Tracts	Serials	Poisons	Serials Bibliography
	d	Surgery Misc.	Medical geography	Nervous System		Misc.	Biography		Vaccination	Serials
	e	Misc.	Botany	Midwifery Obstets.	Life	Eye	Anatomy	Serials	Heart	Serials
	f	Leg, foot spine		Midwifery Obstets.	Bladder Kidneys	Eye	Anatomy	Serials	Lungs Chest	
	g	Surgery	Childrens diseases	4^{o}		Serials	4^{o}		Serials	
	h	4^{o} 2^{o}	4^{o}	2^{o} 4^{o}	2^{o}	Serials			Serials	
CUPBOARDS		Serials	Serials Oversize Books	Serials Oversize book (plates)	Serials Oversize book (plates)	Serials				

their way fairly quickly to what they wanted because there was some semblance of organisation; buttheycould not rely upon works on the same subjects being shelved together, and the *Catalogue* was an indispensable tool, although it had to be searched laboriously if the subject approach was used, for no evidence has been found to suggest that any form of subject index was in existence. The Library was probably not untypical of its period in its approach to stock organisation; although the 1843 *Catalogue* of the Royal College of Surgeons Library was a sophisticated class catalogue arranged systematically, this approach in the large collection of an examining body was unlikely to be emulated in small provincial society libraries where the Honorary Librarians were appointed from their own busy members.

The year 1841 was significant for the Library not only in the publication of its *Catalogue* but also because it was affected by the changes made to the *Rules* of the Society. Since 1809 there had been only two librarians, William Woollcombe and John Hele Fuge (Table 38), both of whom had held the offices of Treasurer and Librarian simultaneously. The nature of the duties of the Librarian had thereby become indistinct. It had apparently become the Secretary's task to receive the books after they had completed circulation; and the porter-clerk looked after the Library in the Dispensary. In 1841 the post of Librarian was re-established with specific duties.

> "XII. LIBRARIAN.
>
> One of the Members, with the name of Librarian, shall have the charge and superintendance of the Library, which is at present placed in the Committee Room of the Plymouth Publick Dispensary, by permission of the Governors of that Institution. He shall receive all books which may have been circulated by the Secretary, and he shall annually propose the sale of duplicate Periodicals, and early editions of other works among the Members." (116)

The Librarian had the authority to decide which of the circulated books should be bound before depositing them in the Library. Once per year the Library was closed for the stock to be examined, and the Librarian was assisted in this task by the Secretary and two other Members. Presumably this was a stock check against the catalogue as well as an examination of the physical condition of the books. No change was made to the arrangements for circulating new books and periodicals, but all fines were officially abolished. Up to four volumes could be borrowed from the Library by Members or Associates who had to apply in

Table 38. Plymouth Medical Society Honorary Librarians 1794-1914

R. B. Remmett	1794-1800*
W. Woollcombe	1800-1822
J. H. Fuge	1822-1841
H. Fortescue	1841-1845
H. Smith	1845-1852
T. A. Stewart	1852-1861
C. R. Prance	1861-1868
E. Morris	1868-1875
E. F. Thorold	1875-1880
A. H. Bampton	1880-1888
W. C. Wilson	1888-1889
J. E. Square	1889-1893
C. E. Russel-Rendle	1893-1900
W. L. Pethybridge	1900-1904
A. B. Soltau	1904-1913
G. C. F. Robinson	1913-

* Dr. Remmett held all of the offices, including the responsibilities which were to be delegated in 1800 to the first officially designated Librarian.

person or in writing. The loan period was specified; folios and quartos could be kept three weeks, and octavos or smaller formats for two weeks, "and no longer, if application be made for them".

For the next thirty years the above arrangement appears have operated with no significant change. There were occasional sales of duplicate periodicals and early editions of works which were replaced by the latest editions, but there were no other deliberate disposals, for most of the 1841 stock reappears in later editions of the catalogue. The growth of the collection exceeded the space available in the bookcases of 1841, and in 1846 extra shelving was added (117). In 1856 another room in the Dispensary was formally taken over, as the Board Room was too small for the Library, but perhaps the encroachment had begun long before then.

9.3.4 Re-organisation and change 1869 - 1892

In 1869 the Society was restructured. The number of Members had dwindled to nine in that year; three of them retired and were each paid 10 gns. as their share of the Society's property which was valued at £50; the remaining Members donated their shares, totalling £18, to the Medical Benevolent Society. The formula upon which the value of the shares was worked out is not given, but probably bore some relation to length of membership; the result, however, was that the way was clear for complete re-organisation. The two categories of Member and Associate were abolished, and all members had equal standing. The former Members' custom of dining together was dropped, and an annual dinner was substituted, coupled with the annual general meeting. Those who attended the quarterly meetings would in future be refreshed by coffee provided by the Society instead of dinner at their own expense! The office of President was re-established, and the President and other officers (Secretary, Treasurer and Librarian) formed a Committee of Management. The property was vested in six trustees, and the Trust Deed of 24 April 1871 contains a Schedule of property which included a few pictures and "about 2,000 volumes of books with the cases containing them". Perhaps it was the size of the Library, now five times the size of the collection moved into the Dispensary in 1817, which made it necessary to move in 1871 to the nearby South Devon &

East Cornwall Hospital in Notte Street. The Library was placed in its Committee Room, and the necessary re-arrangement of stock was the cue for a new *Catalogue* in 1872 (117). This edition was less detailed than the 1841 edition; it kept to the alphabetical arrangement by author, but the individual entries normally lacked any statement of edition, date of publication and format, and except in the case of serials it usually omits numbers of volumes in a work also. The number of works included in it was nearly 1,700, including the publications of the Sydenham Society and New Sydenham Society for which the Library had subscribed since 1843. The Library copy which must have contained the annotated shelfmarks as in 1841 has not survived, but it is possible to elicit from the two appendices of shelf-marked old folios and serials, and a small number of manuscript entries, that there now existed twenty bookcases, A - P and R - V. Shelves are lettered a - k, but the number varied in each bookcase although all bookcases seemed to have at least eight shelves; this is probably to be interpreted as a reassignment of letters to each bookcase, and the conversion of the former cupboards into a simple continuation of the alphabetical lower case letter sequence of the shelves, starting with 'a' at the top of each bookcase. Some rearrangement of stock had evidently taken place, but the details are not clear; the top two shelves 'a' and 'b' in nearly all of the bookcases contained serials. Case F contained the Sydenham Society series also, and several shelves of T and U contained serials. The old folios were relegated to the bottom of J and L, and there is no evidence of the maintenance of the special small books sequence. No real indication is given of the subject arrangement of the books, which presumably continued in some form; but the 1872 *Catalogue* does contain the first attempt to assist readers using the subject approach; the alphabetical sequence of authors is followed by an alphabetical arrangement of subject headings, under which the relevant authors' surnames are given, usually subarranged in alphabetical order, for example:

> "Brain and Mind -
>
> Abercrombie, Burrows, Hulme, Monro, G. Moore,
> Mayo, Reynolds, Solly, Spurzheim,
> Tiedemann, Winslow."

Subject headings are included for subjects not represented in the 1872 stock, for example, geology, bone, jaundice. Although this provision for future expansion was made, and blank leaves were left between sections of the main sequence to allow up-dating, the Library was soon to experi-

ence another shake-up instead of resuming the tranquil existence to which it had formerly been accustomed.

The work of the South Devon and East Cornwall Hospital was hampered on its original site by insufficient accommodation to serve the growing population of the area, despite the addition of a new wing in 1863; and the sanitary conditions were giving cause for concern. It was decided to build a new hospital at Greenbank, which was opened in 1884, and the old hospital had to be sold to help defray the cost of the new building. The Society's Library therefore had to be moved. A special meeting of the Society was convened on 4 March 1884 to consider whether the Library should be moved to the new Hospital, or some other place. It was resolved to place the Library in the new Hospital building subject to receiving permission to do so by the Hospital Committee. It was evidently realised by both the Society and the Hospital Committee that the large collection of some 2,500 volumes would need considerable space. The Society had considered at the special meeting the general question of disposing of old books, but this proposal met with no support. The probable location of the room which might be allocated to the Library seems to have been known, and the book capacity assessed; permission seems to have been sought to place the anticipated overflow in the Hospital's Committee Room. On 1 April it was reported that permission had been granted "on the understanding that an oaken bookcase to correspond with other furniture of the Committee Room would be provided by Plymouth Medical Society to take those books that the Library would not hold" (118). Then the Hospital Committee changed its mind, and decided, in September, that it was undesirable to have a bookcase in the Committee Room. A special meeting of the Society was held on 26 September to consider "the disposal of old books such as are obsolete, or for which there would be no room in the Library of the New Hospital" (119) The Society had little option but to dispose of stock, whether it wanted to or not. The Secretary was given power to dispose of the old books at his discretion and in any manner, except that he should give to members of the Society any rejected book for which they expressed a wish. Fast action followed, for on 18 November, less than one month later, the Society presented 1,600 volumes to Plymouth Free Public Library. Perhaps this solution had been suggested by the example at Devonport, where the Devonport and Stonehouse Medical Society deposited

its much smaller Library of 700 volumes in the Devonport Free Public Library in 1882. Certainly this method of disposal meant that the older works remained accessible to the members of the Plymouth Medical Society. The donation included most of Remmett's books, old medical works and biography, which were received philosophically if not enthusiastically by the Borough Librarian, for he commented that although they were out of date works they were not without literary merit. The remnants of the Society's Library now consisted of about 1,000 volumes of modern medical works and periodicals, which were transferred into the new Library in November 1884 (120). Ironically, the Hospital Committee did then give permission for two small bookcases to be placed in the Committee Room, in each recess by the fireplace, if necessary (121).

Possibly members of the Society had realised before this that the Library needed some attention, but the former size of the collection might well have discouraged them from action. The smaller library would be much easier to reorganise. In 1886 a special sub-committee was appointed "to draw up Rules for the better regulation of the Library, institute fines, and instruct the Librarian as to the same." (122) The Librarian referred to was a paid employee whom they determined to appoint for one year only at a salary of £10 (123), and the annual subscription was increased to 3os. to cover the extra cost. The same meeting resolved that the circulation of books should cease at the end of 1886; this seems to refer to the circulation of the newly purchased books throughout the complete membership, not a prohibition on borrowing from the Library, for new rules were issued shortly which covered loan periods (Table 39). There is some confusion in the minutes about the appointment of the Librarian, for the Mr. Wilson appointed at the special meeting to appoint a Librarian on 20 February 1888 was Mr. W. C. Wilson, the Honorary Librarian. A paid Librarian nevertheless seems to have been appointed, and in November 1887 another sub-committee was set up "to see that the Librarian makes out a Catalogue of Books " (124); one year later, it was resolved that the resulting catalogue should be printed (125) and the same sub-committee was appointed to arrange the catalogue for printing "with the Librarian". The following year, the paid Librarian appears to have been discharged, for subscriptions reverted to 21s. instead of 30s., and thanks were given to E. Square (one of the sub-committee) for his labours and service in connection with the preparation of the new *Catalogue* (126); Eliot Square was elected

Plymouth ⁘ Medical ⁘ Society.

LIBRARY RULES.

1. Members only are allowed to take Books from the Library.
2. Library door to be kept locked whenever Librarian is absent. Key to be kept in the drawer of the inkstand on the Hall table.
3. New Books to be advertised in the Library as received.
4. Folios and Quartos may be kept one month. Octavos and Books of a less size three weeks and no longer. N.B.—Members are to record Books taken out in book supplied for the purpose. Not more than four volumes shall be allowed to any person at the same time.
5. Early editions of modern works to be sold by auction.
6. If a Member neglects within fourteen days to return a Book after having received a notice from the Librarian, the Librarian be empowered to purchase a new copy, and charge the price of the same to the offending Member.
7. A Fine of Twopence per day will be levied for any Book detained over allotted time up to fourteen days, after which foregoing Rule will be rigidly enforced.
8. No fresh issue of Books will be allowed to the erring Member until his fines are paid.

Signed Committee of Management,

A. H. BAMPTON,

Hon. Sec.

Table 39 Plymouth Medical Society Library rules c. 1885

Honorary Librarian in 1890 (Table 38) and was to see the Library through a few difficult years.

In 1889 the new *Catalogue*, representing about 1,200 volumes, was published. It still consisted of an alphabetical author sequence, but was more sophisticated, for initials or forenames had been added to authors' surnames, and a volumes statement followed the short title. Editions and dates were again omitted, probably because it was easier to maintain the catalogue when new editions were acquired - they were simply replacements which did not need to be recorded. Many of the works from the 1872 edition reappear, but were probably new editions of the texts. Most of the old works had, however, been transferred to the Borough Library and there had been many acquisitions 1872 - 1889. The contents of the 1889 edition were therefore quite different. The most important difference between the two catalogues was the introduction of an alphabetical subject index to a *systematic* arrangement of the Library. Table 40 shows the new arrangement, and the subject terms used against the shelves on this occasion are the terms used in the printed *Catalogue* itself (127). A clearer system of shelfmarking had been adopted by the substitution of numbers instead of lower case letters for the shelves of each bookcase, starting at the top shelf. Little comment needs to be made on the arrangement which is self-explanatory, but it can be noticed that the stock had evidently expanded in size because it occupied sixteen bookcases each with eight shelves and some with cupboards.

The number of members of the Society had also grown since the reorganisation in 1869, and now was about thirty. Not only had the accommodation for the books and periodicals become strained, but the Library Room at the Hospital had become too small and too public for the meetings of members, which had now begun to take the form of 'paper' and 'clinical' evenings. In 1891-2 meetings were held in the Public Dispensary, and the Society tried without success to return there on a permanent basis. It was then arranged to rent two rooms in Athenaeum Chambers, at an annual rent on a sliding scale according to the number of members - £16 p.a. for less than 35, plus 10s. p.a. for every extra member, not exceeding £20 p.a. The Library moved into these new quarters in May 1892 (128), and on 2 June the rearrangement of the books began; on 24 June it was reported that a new Shelf Catalogue had been

Table 40. Plymouth Medical Society Library: outline of the arrangement of bookstock in 1889.

CASES		A	B	C	D	E	F/G/H	K/L	M/N	O	P	R	S
		MEDICAL								SURGICAL			
SHELVES	1									Ear, tongue throat	Syphilis		
	2	Chemistry	Anatomy	Diseases of Children & Women	Gout & Rheumatism	Electricity & Magnetism				Eye	Bladder Rectum	Biography	Biography
	3	Botany Materia medica	Anatomy	Women's diseases	Lungs	Nervous System				Spine	Kidneys	Science	Biography Science
	4	Botany Materia medica Therapeutics	Jurisprudence		Heart	Nervous System						Science	Science
	5	Physiology	Digestion		Baths, Spas, climate	Nervous System							
	6	Pathology	Dentistry Dietetics		Hygiene	Skin				Antiseptics			
	7		Old age		Hygiene							Bacteriology Microscope	
	8											Vaccination	
CUPBOARDS			Anatomy	Skin		Current Serials	Current Serials	SYDENHAM SOCIETY					

prepared, and an unknown Mr. Smith was paid £2.19.6 for writing it. This document has survived, and an examination of its contents and a comparison with the 1889 organisation of stock suggests that the work carried out in the short period in June 1892 was a rationalisation by reorganising the order of the bookcases, rather than a major re-organisation of the books and journals within the bookcases, which numbered sixteen in both years. In 1889, bookcases A - E, O - P, and R - S contained books; bookcases F - H, and K - N contained the journals, reviews and reports. In 1892 bookcases A - J were for books, bookcases K - P and R were for serials. This was achieved by relettering the 1889 bookcases O and P to become A and B; C, D and E remained the same; bookcases A, B, R and S became F, G, H and J; and F - N became K - R.

9.3.5 Period of transition, 1892 - 1914

The re-organisation of the Library in 1892 was probably mainly due to the change of premises, but it could also have been an early sign of the revitalisation and changes which were taking place in the Society itself at about its centenary. A number of changes were made in the rules, some of which directly affected the Library. The first important change was the insertion of a new rule in 1892 which for the first time in the Society's history set a clear objective:

> "I. NAME AND OBJECTS OF THE SOCIETY.
> This Society shall retain its original name - THE PLYMOUTH MEDICAL SOCIETY.
>
> The objects of the Society shall be the maintenance of a Medical Library for the use of its Members, and occasional meetings for the discussion of subjects of professional interest." (129)

Members now had to be "duly qualified Medical Practitioners ... provided they have practised their profession in the district for not less than three months." Candidates had to be proposed and seconded by members of the Society or invited by the Council; in 1896 the old method of ballot was still used to elect members ("one black ball in six to exclude") but by 1913 this had been changed to the modern method. A notice containing the names of candidates had to be displayed before the general meeting, and election was automatic unless an objection was lodged; otherwise a ballot or vote was taken. Members still paid an

entrance fee and an annual subscription, but the entrance fee was waived for several groups of members such as "Medical Officers of the Navy or Army on the active list", the Resident Medical Officers of Hospitals, Medical Officers of Public Medical Services, and practitioners who lived beyond a five-mile radius. The entrance fee was reduced from two guineas to one guinea in 1910 (130). In 1913 a category of Temporary Membership was introduced at 10s. 6d. for six months. In 1910 the first lady member was admitted (131). Through these measures the Society was opening up its membership in a way which was to enable it to become the professional society for the medical profession-at-large in the area, a great contrast to its original restriction to fifteen Members.

A new pattern of meetings was established in 1892; instead of quarterly meetings, the Society met twice per month from October to March, the meetings taking the form of "paper" "discussion" or "clinical evenings, with an annual general meeting and annual dinner. Medical politics were hotly debated, and an Ethics Committee was set up in 1896. In 1904 there was a reorganisation of the Committee of Management which henceforward became the Council, consisting of the President, retiring President, the two Secretaries, Treasurer, Librarian, and six elected members.

The changes taking place to the Society gradually brought about a clarification of the role of the Honorary Librarian. In 1872 his duties were the same as in 1841. In 1886 it was decided to stop circulating new books, and so the 1889 *Rules* (132) reduce the Secretary's duty to circulating the periodicals only, while the Librarian now received the new books and was required to "advertise their names in the library as received". In 1889 the Librarian had taken from the Secretary the discretionary power of deciding to buy urgently needed books, although the Secretary was responsible for ordering them. In 1889 the Librarian also had executive powers to dispose of duplicate periodicals and early editions, instead of simply proposing which items should be sold among the members. The extra pressure of work on the Secretariat caused by the new fortnightly meetings and growing correspondence on medico-social issues of the time, was likely to have been the reason for the transfer of responsibility for circulating periodicals from the Secretary to the Librarian in 1896. Some doubt

about the legality of disposing of early editions and obsolete books, which were technically "property" vested in the Trustees, was apparently the reason for reducing the Librarian's power to dispose of Library materials exclusively to duplicate periodicals in 1897. Since that date the description of the Librarian's duties and responsibilities has remained virtually unchanged until the Library ceased to be an active collection under the Society's control, in the 1970s. The one change was simply the omission in 1926 of the duty to circulate periodicals, for it was decided at that date to discontinue the circulation arrangements (133). The extracts relating to the Library and the Librarian in the 1897 *Rules* have been compiled in Table 41 to summarise the situation as it was in effect in 1914 as well as 1897.

In the context of the total history of the Society's Library from 1794 to about 1974, it appears that the Library had passed the watershed of its development before 1900, probably before 1884 when it reached its maximum size as an active collection. This, however, can only be appreciated in hindsight, and members of the Society maintained an active interest in the Library during the early years of the twentieth-century. Books and journals were still being added to the stock, although the percentage of the income spent on them declined as overheads on wages, rent, and miscellaneous expenses increased. In 1911, for example, a membership of 60 produced an income of £90. 2. 0, and the expenditure was £86. 9. 8½; only £30, i.e. 33% of the income was spent on books, journals and binding; rent accounted for 27%, wages and insurance 10%, and miscellaneous expenditure 30%.

A subscription was taken out to the specialist commercial subscription firm Lewis's Library in 1908, thereby enabling members to have access to an additional supply of up-to-date medical works. The Library stock continued to increase, but the records are more difficult to interpret after the last printed *Catalogue* of 1889. Within eight years of the 1892 manuscript shelf-list, the Hon. Secretary was authorised by the Society to approach any members likely to be willing to undertake the compilation of a new shelf catalogue, and the Introduction to the *Rules* printed in 1957 refers to a catalogue being produced in 1907; but this appears to have been the second surviving manuscript shelflist which is of that approximate date, for there is no evidence of any other printed catalogue, and the reference in 1957 was

Table 41. Plymouth Medical Society Library. Librarian's responsibilities and duties, 1897

(From the *Rules*, 1897)

XII. "THE HON. LIBRARIAN

The Hon. Librarian shall have the charge and superintendence of the Society's library, procure books, catalogue them, and advertise their names in the library as received; he shall also dispose of duplicate periodicals as he finds necessary."

XIV. "THE ORDERING OF BOOKS

The books shall be confined to those written on Medicine and the Sciences connected with it. They shall be ordered at a Meeting by a majority of the Members present, through the Hon. Librarian; but, in the intervals of meeting, a discretionary power shall be vested in the Hon. Librarian of ordering such book as he may think it desirable for the Society to have without delay."

XV. "THE CIRCULATION OF PERIODICALS

The Hon. Librarian shall affix to all new periodicals in circulation the names of the Members in such order as he may find most convenient, and state at his discretion, the time each periodical may be kept.

All periodicals after lying on the library table for one month may be treated as shelf books."

XVI. "SHELF BOOKS

All books shall be deposited in the library.

The library is open to Members for purposes of reference and reading, on every week-day from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. and on Sundays from 12 to 2 p.m.

Members may remove books from the library on making the requisite entry in the book kept on the table for that purpose. The borrower is responsible for the return of the books within fourteen days, entering in the above book the date of their return.

If a Member neglects within seven days to return a book after having received a notice from the Hon. Librarian, the latter shall be empowered to purchase a new copy and charge the price of the same to the offending Member.

XVIII. "CLOSURE OF THE LIBRARY

On or before the 23rd of April, the Secretary shall give notice to each Member that the library will be closed for one week, from the 1st to the 8th of May, and that all books must be returned to the library on or before the 1st May.

written by laymen to whom any library compilation was likely to have been "a catalogue". It is difficult to understand why the 1907 Shelf-list was needed, instead of updating the 1892 copy, as it virtually duplicates the former document before making new additions; the most likely explanation is that the 1892 copy disappeared , causing the request for a volunteer to compile a new one (134). The only difference between the two shelflists is the extension of periodical runs in the later version, from which it emerges that two extra bookcases, S and T, had been provided to accommodate them. An inventory of the Society's property in 1901 refers to a "Catalogue of Authors and Subjects", which has not survived (135).

The Library was open for extended hours, which in 1897 and probably for long after that were 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. weekdays, and 12 - 2 p.m. on Sundays. There is no record of the extent to which it was used for reference purposes, but the number of books borrowed can be seen from a surviving loans register, which showed that the average number of recorded loans per annum for the period 1901 - 1914 was 119, with an actual fluctuation between 77 and 154. The figures had, in fact, dropped below 100 in 1910, and never recovered their former level thereafter, but dwindled to about 20 during the war years 1914-8. This loan register must be treated with caution, for although members of the Society were expected to enter their borrowings as a matter of honour, it is easy to envisage that this was not done on many occasions when the book was taken outside of the Library for short periods only!

In 1914, therefore, the Library was poised on the verge of a sharp decline in its fortunes, but in that actual year it must have appeared to be in an active and useful condition, serving members of the medical profession from the Three Towns and beyond. It was not affected by the local government changes which created the new County Borough of Plymouth.

9.3.6 Surviving bookstock from the pre-1914 Library

About 350 volumes survive from the pre-1914 period of the Library's history, and these form an interesting and quite representative cross-section of the old Library, so it seems appropriate to close this

account of the Plymouth Medical Society Library with their description, particularly as there is some doubt about the future of these volumes which are in a generally bad state of repair.

The oldest work is Boyle's *Sceptical chemist, 1661,* followed by Browne's *Compleat treatise of the muscles, 1681,* Walwyn's *Physick for families, 1681,* and Mauriceau's *Diseases of women with child, 1683.* Eighteenth-century medical publications are represented by works by Baillie, Charles and John Bell, Cheselden, Fuller, Griffiths, Harris, Hooke, John Hunter, Mead, Jenner, Monro, Morgagni, Pott, Reid, Savigny, Smellie and Van Swieten. Less than 8% of the surviving works antedate the formation of the Society in 1794, and these publications were donations and bequests; for example, Boyle's *Sceptical chemist* is the only surviving volume from Dr. Remmett's books which were added in 1823. From 1794 there are publications which were presumably acquired by the Society in its early days, for example a volume of pamphlets 1798-1800 on vaccination, including one by the Society's member Richard Dunning whose name is linked with that of Jenner in that field. About 21% of the publication dates fall between 1800 and 1829, 18% 1830-39 and 20% 1840-49; although these percentages cannot be claimed to be related to the actual percentage acquisitions in those decades, they are useful in demonstrating that the Society maintained a constant flow of new literature, it being presumed likely that the items were acquired within a comparatively short space of being published. The mid-century decades are represented particularly by the publications of the firms Longmans (and its numerous variants of name), and John Churchill; many are large illustrated works, such as anatomical drawings. A few overseas works were also acquired, such as Cruveilhier's *Anatomie pathologique, 1829-42,* Alibert's *Description des maladies de la peau, 1825,* and an American publication by Bushe in 1837. The majority of works are English language titles published mainly in London with some Edinburgh and Dublin publishers. Two items ofparticular interest are Florence Nightingale's *Notes on nursing, 1861,* and *Notes on hospitals, 1859;* she gave advice on the design of the wards at the new hospital opened in Devonport in 1863, but it is not known whether she had a personal contact with the Society and these two publications.

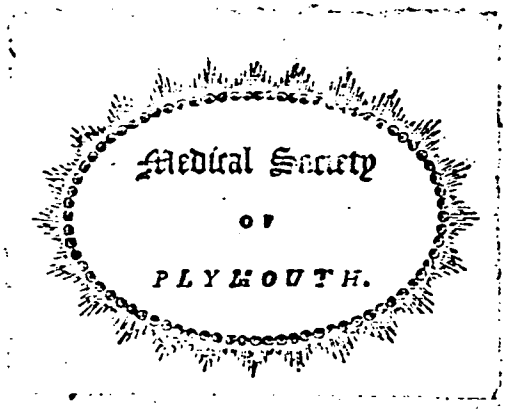
In 1843 the Sydenham Society was established to publish important works which were not readily accessible; its successor, the

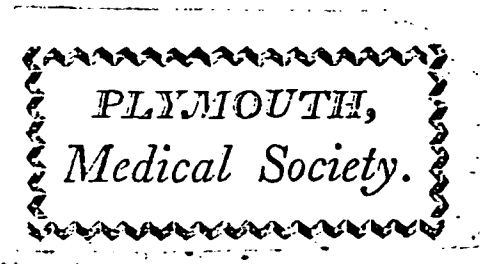
New Sydenham Society, had the same objective, and continued until 1907. The Plymouth Medical Society subscribed from the very beginning until the end , and the resulting publications are strongly represented; from 1860 onwards these publications form the majority of the surviving books. Two manuscript volumes have also survived, one of which appears to be of considerable importance as it is the only dated and signed copy of Hunter's lecture notes which is known to exist; it was John Clarke junior's *Notes taken from Mr. Hunter's lectures on surgery, 1781.* The second manuscript item is of local rather than national interest,being *Notes of cases taken in the wards of the South Devon and East Cornwall Hospital 1840-* , by one of the first surgeons appointed to it, W.G. Square.

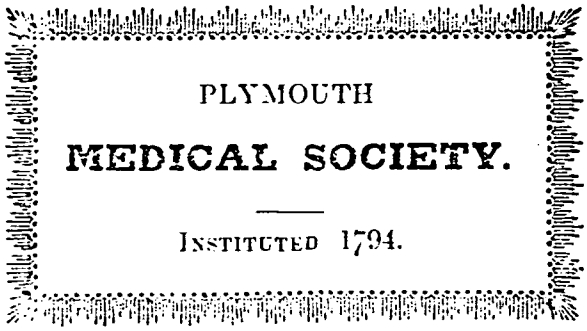
Nearly all of the surviving periodicals were presented to the Library in a bequest by Dr. Fox in 1939, but they contain some interesting volumes of *Lancet 1842-45*, which themselves contain the bookplate of John Hele Fuge, and could well be the duplicate copies of periodicals which he is known to have purchased in the occasional auctions held by the Plymouth Medical Society.

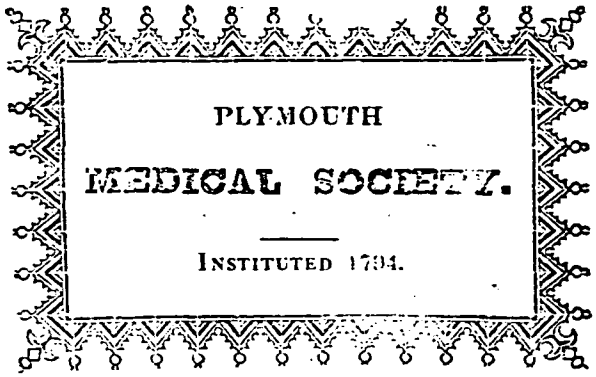
The final group of surviving items worth noting are five volumes of the *Transactions of the Pathological Society of London, 1901 - 1907*, which, although they contain no ownership marks or other evidence to prove provenance, could be genuine survivals of the old Library, and would tie in well with the formation of a specialist Pathological Section by the Society in December 1905.

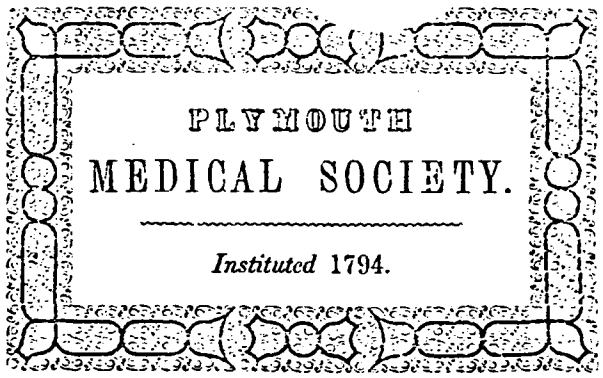
Several of the surviving volumes contain original bookplates of the Society, with several variations as shown in Fig. 37 ; there is a loose correlation between the probable chronological sequence of bookplates and the publication dates of items containing the individual variants which tends to support the general interpretation of stock building which has been suggested in the above description of the surviving volumes. Some works also contain clear shelfmarks inside their front covers, but this is not sufficient to reconstruct any steps in the development of stock organisation in addition to the evidence of the catalogues already described.











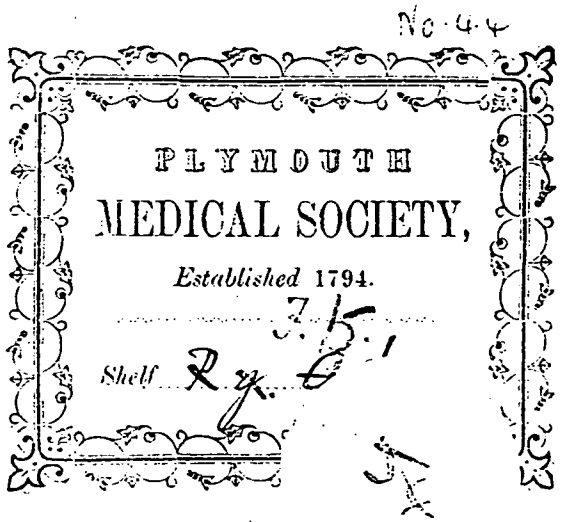


Fig. 37 Plymouth Medical Society Library bookplates.

9.4 THE ROYAL NAVAL HOSPITAL PLYMOUTH MEDICAL LIBRARY.

The reconstruction of the history of the Medical Library of the Royal Naval Hospital Plymouth required a very different methodology to the reconstruction of the Library of the Plymouth Medical Society. The latter was largely reconstructed from the archives of the Society, with a little assistance from the small number of volumes which have survived. The Royal Naval Hospital, by contrast, has a Medical Library containing some 2,000 volumes plus many periodicals, but no library archives and very little in the way of hospital archives. The Medical Library had not previously been studied professionally, although an article was published in 1963 by Captain Lewis (136) who was able to show (from records which have since disappeared, believed destroyed), that a library of some sort existed in 1871. He came to the conclusion that:

> "The origins of the Library remain wrapped in profound mystery despite an intensive search for documents, receipts or lists referring in any way to books or periodicals received." (137).

This was unpromising, and a preliminary search of the literature of naval history, medical history and hospitals, and library history bibliographies revealed no clues. The little information which was available was insufficient to identify potentially useful sources in the Public Record Office, with its vast holdings. The obvious task was to make the books speak for themselves and tell sufficient of their history to enable a literary search in historical sources to be more specifically directed.

The Medical Library is housed today (1982) in two rooms on the top floor of the main administrative block, into which it moved in 1958. One of the rooms is used as a Committee Room and is used as a general reading room for the Library at other times; it contained the bulk of the Library's earliest material. The Library itself, a room on the other side of the staircase, contains the modern collection of active medical books and journals. This division into "historical" and "modern" is not completely clearcut, for many of the largest old books are in the Library room and several recent works are shelved in the Committee Room. The "modern" collection dates effectively from about 1963 when the Library was re-established; it is arranged in broad subject order, with an author card catalogue; it is cared for by a

part-time librarian, whose post was established after 1970. The "historical collection", although formally part of the Library, has fallen into a state of neglect because neither time nor money has been available for a collection of books which was virtually of no practical use to the user community of medical personnel on the staff of the Hospital and other naval medical officers visiting the port. Sporadic attempts had been made to dispose of the old books, but this was prevented by the strenuous efforts of a few interested people such as Capt. Lewis, and the future of the collection is not secure. One of the problems faced by those interested in preserving the old books was the lack of precise knowledge of its origin, history and contents. That was the situation found by the author, on first making contact with the Medical Library in 1979.

The first step was to gain a general idea of the scope of the historical collection of medical books and the age of the books. This was initially carried out by inspecting and analysing a card index of entries in shelf order which had been compiled, at the instigation of Captain Lewis, from about 1963 - 1970. Many people helped to compile the index, although much of the work was carried out by a Senior Laboratory Technician, Mr. E. Dennerley, who was seconded to have oversight of the Library until the part-time Librarian was appointed. Although the card index was adequate for the purpose of the Hospital, the quality of it's 678 entries varies considerably; some cards were simply the briefest of notes - a surname, key word of title, and date - while the most détailed of them contained a useful statement of author, short title, publication place, publisher, date of publication, edition, number of volumes, and annotation of any special feature, such as the language if not in English. Most cards contained one work, but some multiple volume works were entered one volume per card, and duplicate entries occurred which did not necessarily mean duplicate copies. Some editing of the card index was carried out, and the revised file showed that there appeared to have been 641 works up to the latest publication date of 1962. The breakdown of the books by publication date was: 2 pre-1600, 13 1600 - 1699, 61 1700 - 1799, 389 1800 - 1899, and 145 1900 - 1962. The terminus ab quo could, from this information, be before 1800. The books accounted for 610 works, but there were 31 entries for other types of material: 14 periodical titles, 9 annuals and statistical series, 2 entries for pamphlets, one entry for theses,

one manuscript, and four archive items. The books were next analysed in more detail by date of publication, and the percentage distribution per decade is shown in Fig. 38. The median was found to be the year 1844, the lower interquartile date was 1827, and the upper interquartile was 1880. The serial titles were examined, and the date ranges were found to conform to the broad pattern of the books (Fig. 39), although the volumes were in short ranges with the exception of *Medical annual*.

It was apparent that the collection contained books in a variety of languages, and an analysis of these was made. All except two of the works published after 1840 were in English; but the pre-1840 material included 25% Latin, 11% French, 2% Italian and 3% multilingual works including some with Greek and Latin. The declining importance of Latin in medical literature and the increasing importance of English was a normal phenomenon in the late eighteenth-century and early nineteenth-century, but the presence of French and Italian seemed interesting. A broad analysis was then made by subject to ascertain how widely or narrowly the scope related to medicine. The percentage distribution was found to be:

	Pre-1900	1900-1962	Total
	%	%	%
Medical (including medical geography, ethnology, etc.)	66.2	100.0	74.2
General science	23.5	-	17.9
Literature and general works	10.3	-	7.9

Obviously the non-medical works are concentrated in the nineteenth-century bookstock, where they form nearly 34% of the whole pre-1900 stock. The main scientific subjects were: botany and zoology 8.2%, mathematics and astronomy 2%, chemistry 7.1% and geo-sciences 6.2%.

It has to be recognised that the works identified in this rough record of the card index must have formed only a proportion, an unknown proportion, of the original Library stock, and that probably considerable numbers were lost, deliberately disposed of, or destroyed, as had happened in the case of the Library of the Plymouth Medical Society. It would be wrong to extrapolate the surviving works backwards and assume that the character of the remaining stock was necessarily the character of the former library; but nevertheless an impression had already been gained of a library which potentially had a long history,

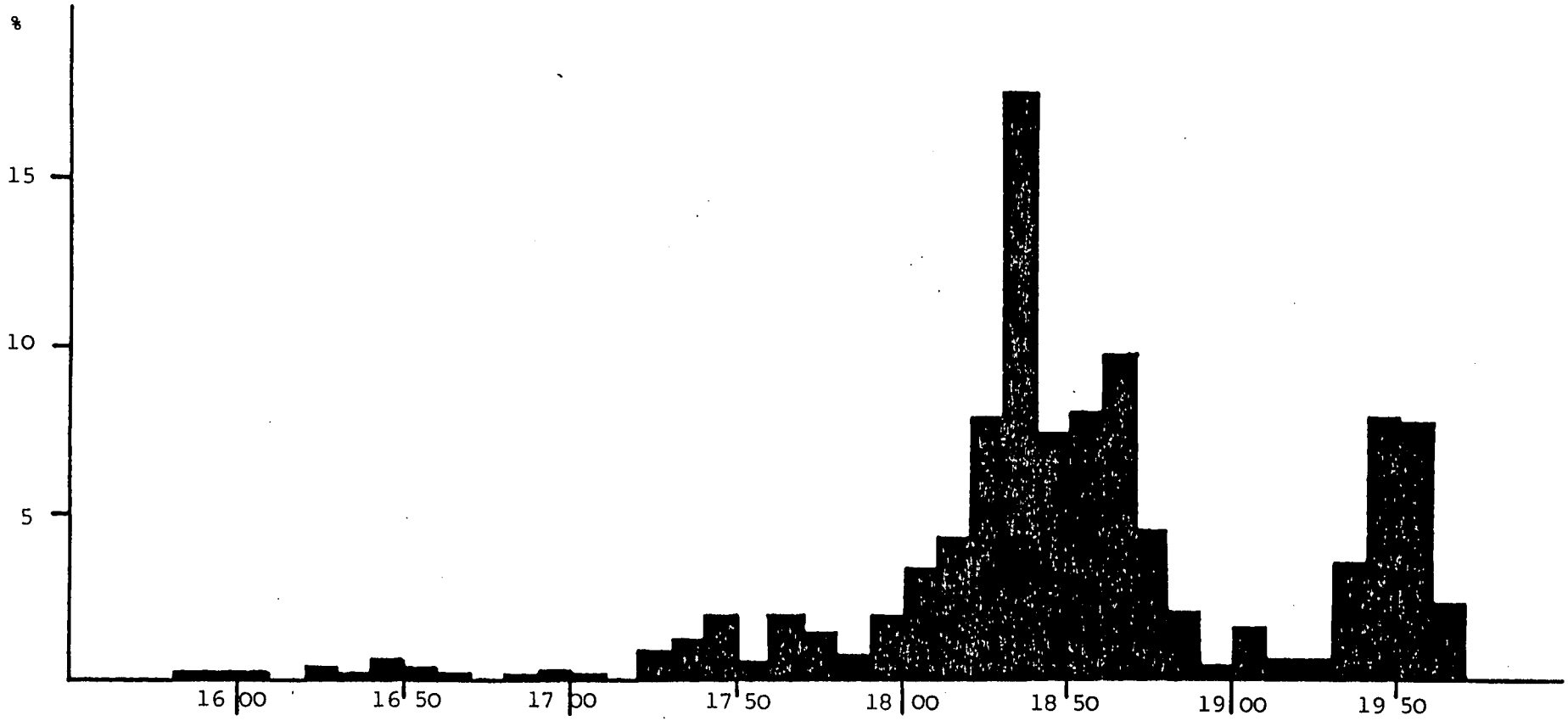


Fig. 38 Distribution of books by publication dates. Medical Library, Royal Naval Hospital Plymouth.

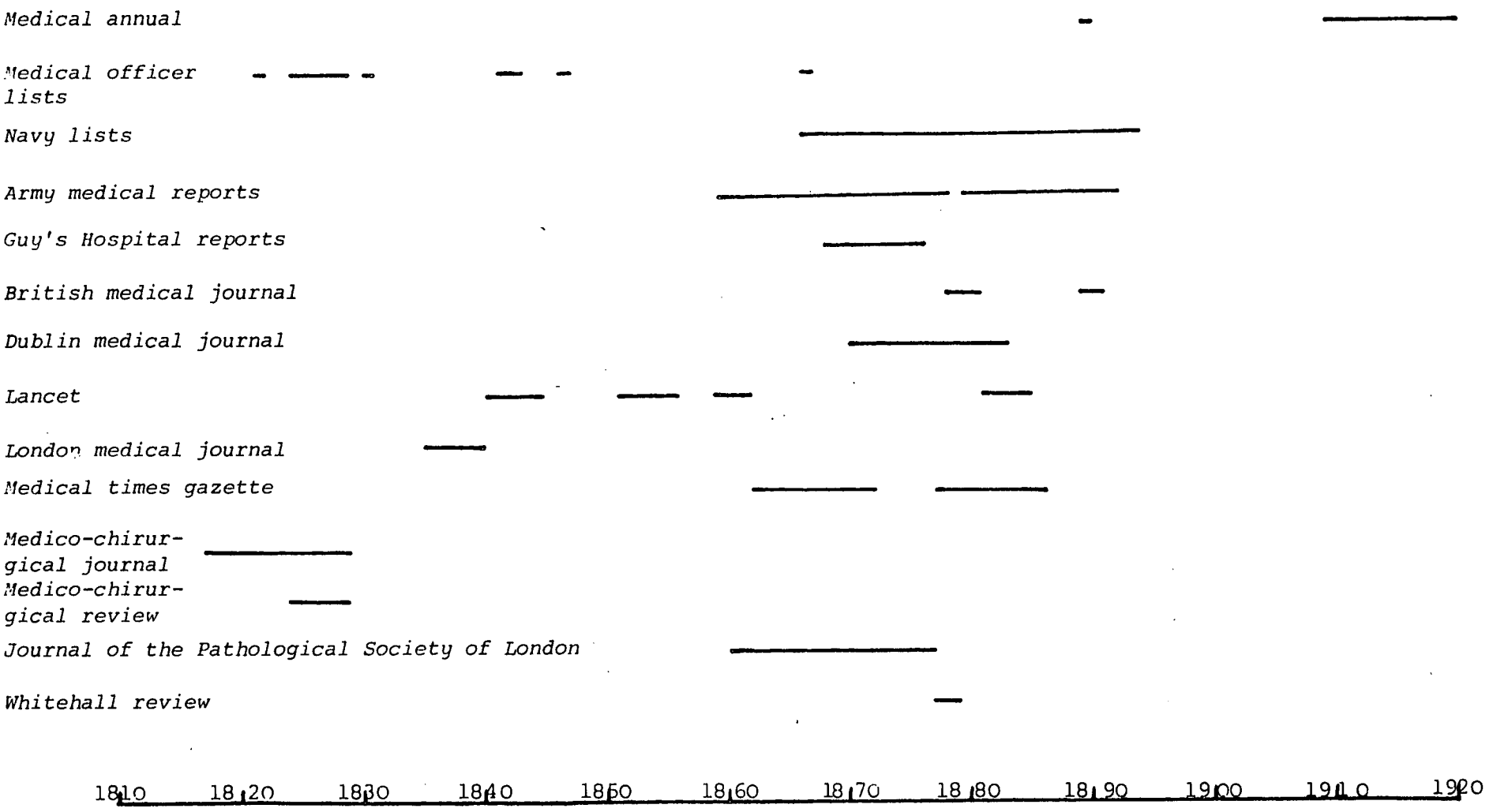


Fig. 39 Royal Naval Hospital Medical Library. Periodicals, pre-1914.

was evidently active in the period around the 1840s, and had probably experienced a period of decline and neglect from about 1890 - 1940. These were useful pointers, but it was obvious from a physical inspection of the books themselves that there was much more information to be gained from them. Some had inscriptions, some had accession numbers, some had accession dates, and so on. In order to record this data as a preliminary exercise to analysing it, it was necessary to provide a reliable basic identification record; the card index proved too inconsistent for the purpose, and so the next step was to create a new set of records for each volume[a]. From this record a series of reconstructions and inferences became possible. This evidence will be examined in the next sub-section, before the reconstruction of the pre-1914 history of the Medical Library is presented.

9.4.1 The evidence of the books

Bookplates. Many volumes contained bookplates proclaiming that the work was from the bequest of Dr. McKinnal or Dr. L. Gillespie, and an analysis of the publication dates of these volumes revealed termini ad quem of 1838 and 1840 respectively, making it possible to follow up the biography of these gentlemen through Admiralty records, and to find out how their professional libraries had become part of the Medical Library at Plymouth (vid. inf.) (Fig. 40).

Accession marks. The books showed a variety of accession marks, from simple ownership stamps, to accession numbers, to dated ownership stamps. The accession stamps have been identified with considerable confidence in the termini ab quo and ad quem, because of supplementary evidence such as dated inscriptions as well as the clear pattern of publication dates of works stamped by the individual stamp variants. Fig.41 shows some of the most important accession stamps.

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[a] After these records had been created it appeared as though they would provide a useful index to the contents and shelf-locations of items in the Medical Library. They have been produced as a duplicated typescript 71-page document, copies of which are located at the Royal Naval Hospital Medical Library and major medical history libraries, under the title: *The Medical Library of the Royal Naval Hospital Plymouth 1825-1900*. The Library's contents are thus now accessible to scholars. The E.S.T.C. has also been notified.

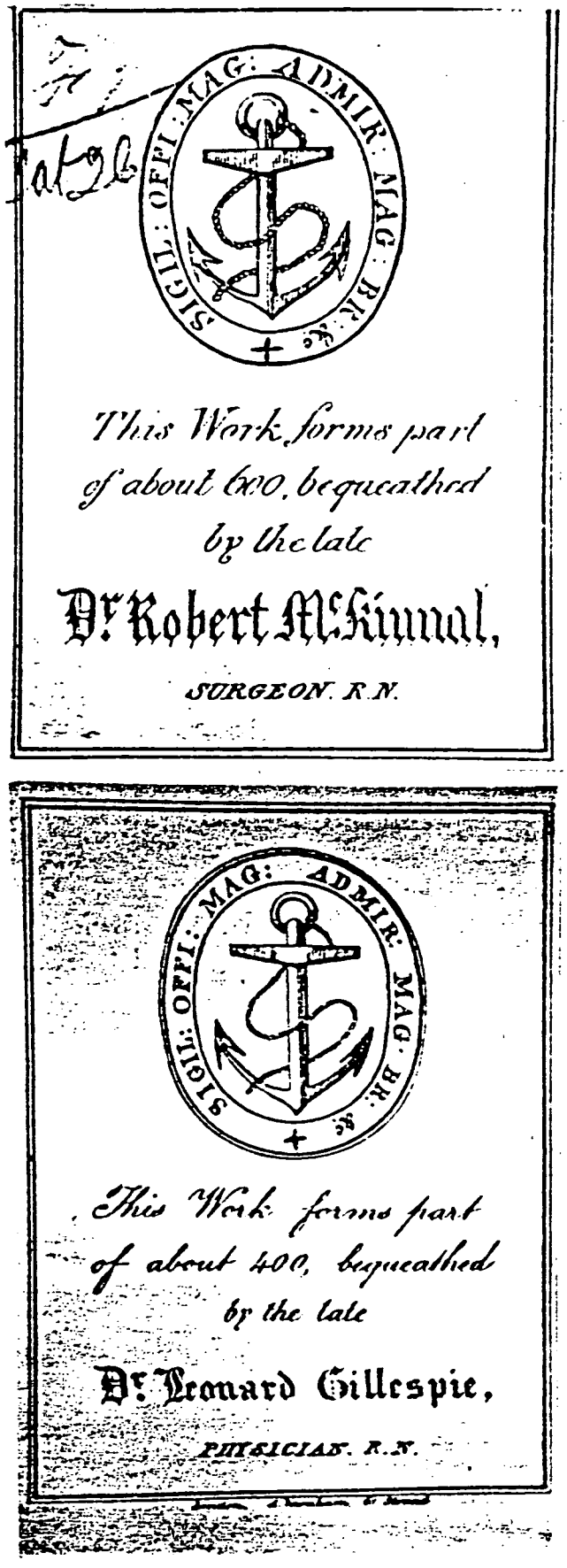
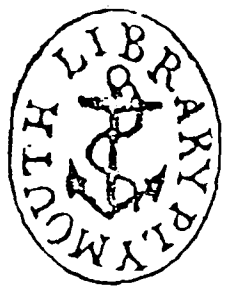
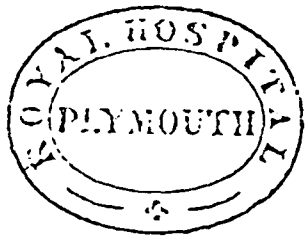


Fig. 40 McKinnal and Gillespie special bookplates.
Medical Library, Royal Naval Hospital Plymouth.



A Not used after 1835

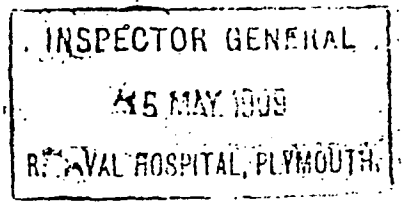


B Used from 1835 to c. 1890

C Accession date added from c.1863

D Used only in 1888

E Used 1898-1901



F Used 1893-1908

Fig. 41 Royal Naval Hospital Plymouth Medical Library accession stamps.

Type A is the most interesting, for it proved to have been used only on the original nucleus of stock acquired up to 1835. Type B then succeeded it for over fifty years, and from 1863 this stamp also had the accession date written in the centre oval, and has been distinguished as Type C. The types A, B and C are the most frequent stamps; others were used towards the end of the nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century, sometimes singly and sometimes in combination. The evidence of the accession stamps is sufficiently conclusive to enable any stamped book to be assigned with confidence to a particular period of library accessioning, although it does not preclude an item having been in the Library in unaccessioned condition before then. Some items were obviously re-accessioned; for example, most of the volumes with the type A stamp were later restamped with type B.

The total number of volumes containing an accession number was 484. The lowest accession number found was 12, the highest 1,629. The distribution of surviving volumes was scattered throughout this range, as follows:

accession numbers	surviving volumes
1 - 99	27
100 - 199	31
200 - 299	28
300 - 399	44
400 - 499	44
500 - 599	39
600 - 699	34
700 - 799	27
800 - 899	31
900 - 999	53
1,000 - 1,099	17
1,100 - 1,199	14
1,200 - 1,299	9
1,300 - 1,399	22
1,400 - 1,499	31
1,500 - 1,599	16
1,600 -(1,629)	17

The numbers did not form blocks, but were scattered throughout the sequence, which suggests that the surviving volumes must have formed part of a collection which at some stage had reached a total of at least 1,629 volumes. The McKinnal and Gillespie books appear

throughout the range, showing that they were given accession numbers over a period. Documentary evidence later confirmed that the McKinnal and Gillespie books were received in 1839 and 1844 respectively, and there seems to be a strong probability that it was the receipt of these two collections which caused a new accessioning procedure to be adopted, with the year 1844 as the most likely starting date although it is not impossible for the work to have been carried out before then. The accession numbers were assembled into numerical order to ascertain whether any discernible system emerged, but the order of entry appears to have been completely random, suggesting that it was probably connected with an exercise in reorganising an existing collection. Brief details of the works surviving with the lowest accession numbers are shown in Table 42, from which it will be seen that there seems to be no detectable order by author, subject, title, date, catalogue page or shelf-mark. The latest publication with an accession number was Bryson's *Report on the climate and principal diseases of the African Station, 1847*, which can be proved to have been received in the Library on 4 June 1847. There is other evidence that it was in 1847 that accessioning by numbers ceased. Multi-volume works in course of publication or completion in 1847 were found to have the earlier volumes, received before 1847, with accession numbers; the later volumes received in or after 1847 did not contain numbers. The cessation of accession numbering in 1847 is also suggested by evidence from serial volumes; the *Magazine of natural history N.S. 18 1846* was numbered, but the subsequent volumes were not, and there were other examples of this occurring. There is therefore good evidence that the change took place some time in 1847. About 232 volumes with pre-1848 publication dates do not contain accession numbers, but there are several reasons which could account for this. Possibly retrospective accessioning had not been completed before the exercise was halted ; in many cases the surviving volumes no longer possess the original fly leaves or half-title on which the numbers were usually located, so the numbers could have been lost through binding or by wear and tear. From 1847 the numbering procedure was replaced by a simple type-B ownership stamp, until the date of accessioning began to be added regularly from about 1863.

Catalogue references. Most volumes contain inside their front cover a number which denotes the page of the catalogue on which the work was listed; this is proved by the occasional entries in which the number

Table 42. Reconstructed accessions register, Royal Naval Hospital Plymouth Medical Library.

RECONSTRUCTED ACCESSIONS RECORD FOR SURVIVING BOOKS			OTHER EVIDENCE FROM THE BOOKS WHICH SHOWS NO LOGICAL SEQUENCE EXPECTED IN ANY OTHER RECORD			
Book number	Author and title		Publication date	Stamp Type A	Catalogue page ref.	Shelf mark
12	ALLAN	Manual of mineralogy	1834	x	18	D7
35	CRAIGIE	Elements of the practice of physic. Vol. 1	1836		33	S6
36		Vol. 2	1840		33	S6
41	JOHNSON	Economy of health. 2nd. ed.	1837		19	E4
42	JOHNSON	Influence of the atmosphere 2nd. ed. (DICKSON item)	1818		20	E4
45	de JUSSIEU	Genera plantarum (McKINNAL item)	1791		11	B6
54	LAENNEC	Diseases of the chest. 3rd. ed.	1832	x	40	U2
59	URE	New system of geology	1829	x	18	D7
60	URE	Dictionary of chemistry ... 4th..ed.	1831	x	13	C5
61	URE	Dictionnnaire de chimie. vol. 1	1822		13	C6
62-64		ibid. (GILLESPIE items) vol. 2-4	1823		13	C6
65	HEBERDEN	Commentarrii de morborum (McKINNAL)	1807		23	G3
65 -69	SCARDONA	Aphorismi. 3rd. ed. vols. 1-5 (GILLESPIE items)	1762-3		27	G10
70 -73	WOODVILLE	Medical botany. 3v. & suppl. (GILLESPIE items)	1790-4		12	A10-11
97	PEREIRA	Food and diet	1843		15	C7
101	MAYO	Philosophy of living. 2nd. ed.	1838		28	G5
103	WALKER	Chart ... diseases of the skin	(1844)		15	C7
116	MITSCHERLICH	Practical and experimental chemistry	1838		13	C6

is preceded by the words "Cat. page". Using this evidence, it has been possible to recreate, in part, the contents of each page of the "catalogue" although the order of entries within any page cannot be determined. The result was the discovery that the Catalogue had been organised in a broad subject arrangement. The exact subject heading used for each page cannot be established, but a rough indication of the main subject has been given for each page and the results are shown in Table 43 . In some cases a page appears to have contained more than one subject, sometimes an obvious overflow from the preceding or next page.

The Catalogue appears to have been a comprehensive record of the Library, for it included not only the early nucleus of stock from pre-1835, but also the McKinnal and Gillespie bequests, the stock acquired in the later nineteenth-century, and beyond 1914 (for some of the stock of the modern section of the Medical Library proved to contain similar catalogue references). This is not surprising, for the Library is, after all, a part of a naval establishment, and it has always been an important requirement of the Navy for inventories of stores to be maintained; it seems likely that the Catalogue was originally commenced as much for administrative reasons as for a means of assisting users.

Shelfmarks. Each surviving volume contains a shelfmark, and a few of the pre-1866 publications bear two shelfmarks, showing that some development of the shelf arrangement took place after that date. Many volumes of the original nucleus contain only one shelfmark, suggesting that the earliest shelf arrangement remained constant, but that as new branches of medical and surgical knowledge developed the new stock and relevant old stock was relocated. An outline of the arrangement of the bookstock has been reconstructed from the shelfmarks and is shown in Table 44, although there are inevitably many gaps; but even the surviving works show a persuasively systematic order which cannot be simply by chance. The stock was arranged roughly by subject, and this corresponds very closely with the reconstructed catalogue entries, which now makes it appear that the so-called catalogue was in fact a shelf-list; if so, the evidence of the early unchanged shelfmarks tends to support the view already put forward above, that the "catalogue" was a comprehensive inventory which started at quite an early date.

Table 43. Reconstructed contents of the Catalogue of the Medical Library of the Royal Naval Hospital Plymouth.

Page no.	Subject content	No. works surviving
7	Anatomy	5
8	Anatomy	6
9	Anatomy	12
9A	Anatomy	1
10	Anatomy	2
	General science	3
	Astronomy	3
11	Bibliography	3
	Miscellaneous	2
	Botany	19
12	Botany	14
13	Chemistry	29
14	Chemistry	7
	Skin diseases	15
15	Skin diseases	10
	Food, diet	12
16	Food, diet	4
	Man	10
	Physical education	2
17	French literature	5
	Italian literature	4
	Classical literature	9
	Miscellaneous literature	10
18	Geology and physical geography	31
19	History	4
	Hospital management	3
	Health and hygiene	7
20	Health and hygiene	12
20A	Smallpox	1
21	Miscellaneous	2
22	General reference	5
24	Pharmacology	16
25	Pharmacology	4
	Hydropathy	11
	Therapeutics	2
	Miscellaneous	2
26	Mathematics	3
27	General medicine	6
	Ancient medicine	38
28	Ancient medicine	5
	Medical essays, collected works	20
	General medical works	3
29	General medical works	29
29.4	Ancient medicine	1
30	Periodicals	9
	Miscellaneous	4
31	Serials	14
32	Medical geography	13
33	Medical geography	6
	General medical practice	13
34	General medical practice	2
35	General medical practice	1
38	Nervous diseases	1
40	Chest/heart	3
42	Medical jurisprudence	1
44	Scurvy	1
47	Gynaecology	4
48	Gynaecology	1
49	Pathology	3
51	Pathology	2
	Serial	1
53	Sleep	1
54	Surgery	1
55	Surgery	2
57	Surgery	2
58	Fractures	2
62	Hernia	1
63	Hernia	1
	Wounds	2
64	Wounds	1
65	New Sydenham Society	4
66	Expeditions	1
67	Expeditions	2
68	Zoology	8
69	Zoology	6
77	French literature	1
81	American serial	1

Table 44. Royal Naval Hospital Medical Library. Shelf arrangement

CASES	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	K	L	M	N
SHELVES 1										Examination papers			
2						Pharmacology	History of medicine						
3	Anatomy	British Association Reports	Chemistry	Classics, General literature		Therapeutics	General medicine		Haematology				
4	Anatomy	Astronomy	Chemistry	General literature	Health & Hygiene		General & historical medicine						
5	Anatomy	Botany	Chemistry	General literature		Pharmacology	Medicine				Zoology		
6		Botany	Chemistry	Geology		Pharmacology	Medicine						
7	Anatomy	Botany	Skin diseases	Mineralogy		Boerhaave's works	Medicine	Serials	Pathology		Anatomy	Historical medicine	Dictionaries
8	Anatomy	Botany	Man	History	Misc.		Pharmacology						
9	Anatomy		Diet	Literature	Hospital management	Misc.	Medicine						
10	Anatomy	Botany & Bibliography	Encyclopaedias	Encyclopaedias			Medicine						

12. Serials

CASES	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
SHELVES 1		Serials		Serials				Reports				Serials
2		Serials					Chest	Reports				Serials
3				Reports	Geographical medicine	Medicine	Serials					Zoology
4				Annual lists	Geographical medicine							Zoology
5				Reports			Heart	Medical jurisprudence		Surgery		Zoology
6	Serials	Serials	Serials		Medicine			Navy lists		Surgery		
7	Misc.					Misc.	Nervous diseases		Misc.			
8									Misc.			
9								11 Misc.			Serials	Zoology
10								14 Midwifery				
								16 Medical annuals			Misc.	
								20 Pathology				
								24 Serials				

A few volumes possess in addition to shelfmarks a location mark on the spine which evidently showed their position on the individual shelves, but this evidence is too fragmentary and indecipherable to permit any serious reconstruction of individual shelves.

Binding. The Library volumes were mostly bound in a uniform full leather binding with PLYMOUTH HOSPITAL lettered in gold at the foot of the spine. Some volumes had been bound by the Admiralty's orders before being sent to Plymouth as special donations, and these normally bear the crossed anchor in gold on the front board. Other volumes were bound at Stonehouse by the firm E. W. Cole, whose paper label still remains attached to the inside cover of some volumes. A few early donated volumes which were already in good leather bindings were not rebound in the Library's style. By the 1870s several volumes were evidently being received in publishers' cloth bindings, including the publications of the Sydenham Society and New Sydenham Society. There is no evidence of books being bound from about 1880, although periodicals apparently continued to be bound until at least 1899.

Inscriptions. Occasionally volumes were found to bear a signature or an inscription, in which the name D. Dickson featured frequently as a signature, and several of the inscriptions appeared to have been written in other works by the same hand, although this cannot be proved conclusively. The evidence was simply sufficient to direct attention to D. Dickson as a subject for literary investigation.

It will be seen from this brief resume of the nature of the evidence which has been obtained by the physical examination of the books, that the books indeed have had quite a considerable amount to tell about their history, and provided many useful pointers which could be incorporated in a literary search of records which consisted mainly of the Admiralty records in the Public Record Office. A combination of the literary and physical evidence has enabled the following reconstruction to be made of the history of the Medical Library of the Royal Naval Hospital Plymouth.

9.4.2 The origin and early history of the Library

Temporary hospitals had been set up in the Three Towns for sick and wounded seamen during the Dutch Wars in the second half of the seventeenth-century, but it was not until one hundred years later that a permanent hospital was founded by the Commissioners for Sick and Wounded Seamen. This was the Royal Naval Hospital Plymouth, known as "Plymouth" because of it's situation in that port, although the actual location was at Stonehouse. The hospital was opened in 1762 in new purpose-built buildings, nine years after the great "rival" hospital had been opened at Haslar (Gosport). These two hospitals inevitably had much in common in their development and administration, for both received directives from the same official sources; this was true also in the early history of their respective libraries.

The desirability of establishing medical libraries in the two hospitals seems to have been first recommended publicly in 1797 by Dr. Thomas Trotter, who was Physician of the Fleet and a strong campaigner for improvements in the naval hospitals and medical services. He identified the need to improve the educational facilities for naval surgeons and others, and asked:

> "Would not a medical library be a valuable appendage to these hospitals?" (138)

In 1799 he elaborated his ideas:

> "We now wish to call the attention of medical gentlemen in the Navy to a subject which we barely hinted at before - the establishment of a Public Library, for books on Medicine, and its collateral sciences, at the Royal Hospitals of Haslar and Plymouth. We must speak here as we have felt, from experience. The necessary books which every physician and surgeon must peruse, in order that his knowledge may keep pace with the improvements of his profession are not only numerous but expensive; a great part of them are beyond the reach of an individual; and, besides, the apartments allotted for these officers in a ship put it out of their power to carry any considerable quantity with them. It must be obvious then to everyone, that some establishment of this kind is highly practicable; and we shall briefly state our plan." (139)

The substance of his plan was that the Government should provide a room at Haslar, £40 per annum, and accommodation for a library-keeper. The physicians and surgeons should have 5s. taken out of their annual pay to provide a bookfund, and these medical personnel alone would be allowed to use the library. The library should be open daily for eight

hours. The senior physicians and surgeons would form a committee to transact all the business of the library. Some periodical subscriptions would be taken out, and no member would be allowed to borrow any item for reading outside the library. Trotter offered to donate his own medical books to the library if his proposal should be implemented; but it was not until the 1820s that active steps were taken to establish medical libraries at the hospitals, and this came about through the equally keen interest of Sir William Burnett, Physician-General from 1822 to 1852.

It appears that Sir William Burnett had proposed at least as early as 1825 that libraries and museums should be established at Haslar and Plymouth. The documentation at the Public Record Office is not complete, but a reference was found which was dated 26 September 1825 and mentioned Plymouth Hospital's "Chapel Room prepared for Library and Lecture Room." (140) Apparently this accommodation was not approved, and delays occurred at Plymouth. At Haslar there was more rapid progress, and a document exists at Haslar which describes the duties of Dr. Scott, the Lecturer at Haslar Hospital who was also Librarian.

> "As Librarian you will have the exclusive care and custody of all the books and drawings in the Library and also of the Philosophical Instruments and of all Preparations, Specimens, Casts etc. which may be supplied or presented to the Institution: the books will consist of such standard works on anatomy, surgery, medicine, chemistry, natural history, and natural and experimental philosophy as the Board may decide upon,and of these you are to form a correct Catalogue, digested with such order as to afford the readiest sequencé to any given subject, and you are from time to time to keep this Catalogue completely by entering in it the titles of all such additional Books as may be supplied.
>
> You are not to suffer any of the Books, Preparations, Philosophical Instruments to be taken from the Museum or Library ..." (141)

This casts some useful light upon the expectation of the care of the Library and Museum, and it is probable that similar instructions were later sent to Plymouth, although there is no proof of this.

Meanwhile, at Plymouth attempts were being made to sort out the problem of finding or erecting suitableaccommodation. On 12 June 1827 the Resident Commissioner of the Hospital wrote to the Navy Board that:

> "I beg to acquaint you that I have directed the several Plans of the Museum, intended to be built at this Hospital, to be forwarded to your Office by this evening's coach." (142)

He enclosed the report he had just received from the Inspector of Works; this document quoted £5,532 as the cost of erecting a building for a Library, Museum, etc. in the Steward's Garden near the Entrance Gates of the Hospital. The Inspector pointed out that a building had been converted at Haslar, but:

> "If however that had not been the case, I understand the expense of the Haslar establishment would have been from £3,000 to £3,500. The difference between this sum and that of the Estimate now submitted, chiefly arises from the addition of a Lecture Room, a Room for Dissection, Examination, etc. From the Museum being calculated to receive nearly twice as many cases as that at Haslar, and from the necessity of having deep and expensive fittings for the walls in consequence of the nature of the ground. There are also included in the arrangements now proposed a Lodge and Bedroom for a Porter, together with a Yard, Shed, etc. .." (143)

The total expense of the building amounted to £4,222, and the "book cases, glazed cases for Museum, tables etc. including glass and brass-work complete" were estimated at an additional £1,310.

These communications are of interest in that they show that similar arrangements were originally intended at Haslar and Plymouth. However, it appears that the expensive proposal for the new building at Plymouth was rejected, and Dr. Burnett was evidently called upon to look into the situation further. Copies of the letters are missing until an Admiralty Office reply dated 8 November 1827 gave approval to:

> " ... the plan suggested by Dr. Burnett for commencing a Museum and Library at Plymouth Hospital without incurring any expense at present for erecting a building for that purpose and also ... his recommendations that the Physicians and Surgeons at Haslar and Plymouth Hospitals should be required as part of their duty to give one Clinical lecture in the week to the Assistants of the Hospital and such other medical officers of the Navy as might be able to attend ... provided it is clearly understood that this additional duty is performed by them without any additional remuneration either public or private." (144)

Another delay occurred, for three years. Then, on 16 November 1830 further plans were transmitted to the Admiralty Office of "the two rooms proposed to be appropriated as a Museum and Library at this hospital (145). It appended a sketch plan which showed two equal-sized rooms which were adjacent; the Library Room led off a colonnade, but the precise location on the site was not indicated, nor the scale of the plan. The letter of 16 November was endorsed on 11 February 1831 with

a note by Sir William Burnett that the Board approved and directed the Inspector of Works to prepare this plan and to study economy so as to keep down the estimates as low as possible. Another letter from the Admiralty Office, dated 6 November 1831, followed their consideration of Dr. Burnett's report on his annual inspection at Plymouth.

> "... I am commanded by their Lordships to acquaint you that they approve of the Doctor's suggestion as to commencing the formation of a Library and Museum at Plymouth Hospital, but they do not assent to his proposal for the establishment of a Botanical Garden." (146)

That letter was endorsed:

> "The Board requests the Medical Members to state their opinion as to the mode in which the formation of a Library and Museum should be commenced at Plymouth."

It is not clear why yet another request for permission to go ahead was required, but once again, on 28 November 1832, Sir William Burnett took up the matter:

> "The Library and Museum at Haslar, having attained a footing at once beneficial to the Service, and I may add creditable to the Country, it becomes my duty to solicit their Lordships permission to extend the benefits of these institutions to the Hospital at Plymouth, and which had been ordered by the late Board of Admiralty. There are two rooms in the centre building of the Hospital which are well adapted for the purpose, and a plan for fitting them was made by Mr. Adams Inspector which appeared well calculated for the purpose. I have not however been able as yet to find it amongst the papers of the Department, ... - should their Lordships see fit to agree to the measure, I would beg to suggest that it will be necessary to allow a small sum to lay the foundation of the Library,and also a small yearly sum to keep it supplied with books." (147)

He reported further that Haslar had originally received £400 for the initial stock of books, and £150 per annum to maintain it; but the annual allowance had never been spent completely, and after seven years of operation the Library was over £500 in credit. Therefore, he suggested, Plymouth should be allowed an initial £200 to establish the Library and after that £200 per annum should be sufficient to cover the total expenditure of both libraries. Evidently the Museum at Haslar had cost only "a very trifling nature" because it was well supplied by specimens of natural history by medical officers and friends of Sir William. In conclusion to this lengthy report, he commented:

> "Though it will no doubt require a little time to prepare the Rooms, still I think the period may be advantageously employed in procuring the Books, ..." (148)

At last practical steps were taken to found the Plymouth Hospital Library and Museum. The *Navy estimates 1833-4* contain provision for

£700 to fit up the two rooms as a Museum and Library and to build a Porter's Lodge (apparently not associated with the Museum and Library); £200 for the purchase of books to form the foundation collection of the Library; and £100 for the annual outlay on books and specimens. In the next financial year Plymouth and Haslar were each allocated £100 p.a., but from 1835-6 onwards the total allocation of £100 had to cover their joint expenditure (149).

On 21 October 1833 Sir William was able to report that the formation of the Library and Museum were proceeding (150), and presumably matters went forward to his satisfaction for the Library is not mentioned again in his annual reports until December 1840.

> "The Library in this Hospital is now very respectable but the Museum as regards anatomical and pathological preparations does not proceed so well as I could wish ..." (151)

The following year he attributed the lack of progress in the Museum to the lack of assistance, and recommended the appointment of a fulltime first-class labourer, to work under the direction of the Surgeon, who was apparently responsible for the Museum. No fulltime Lecturer had been appointed at Plymouth despite the precedent at Haslar, and the development of the Library and Museum seem to have depended very greatly upon the Physician and the Surgeon respectively, who appear to have had these extra duties placed upon them without any extra salary. Perhaps no appointment was made to assist the Surgeon and this might account for the fact that no Museum ever really emerged at Plymouth. The Library, on the other hand, grew rapidly, and much of its success must have been attributable to the Physician, Dr. David Dickson, who was appointed in 1824 to the Plymouth Hospital and remained there until his retirement in 1847 (152).

The surviving library books themselves bear witness to the rapid build up of a stock nucleus in 1833, 1834 and 1835, for 93 works (190 volumes) bear the ownership stamp which was used exclusively in that period. The majority were almost certainly acquired by purchase, for they were very recent publications; a few earlier publications seem to have been given by Dr. Dickson, who at this time was knighted and became Sir David. The subject scope of the surviving 93 works and their distribution was, in descending order: 60 medicine, 9 chemistry, 9 geology, 8 botany and zoology, 3 general science (including the abridged *Philosophical transactions of the Royal Society)*, one set of encyclo-

paedias, one French dictionary, one work on wine, and one on travel.

An early letterbook of the Superintendent Physician of the Hospital has survived, covering the period 2 March 1839 to 18 June 1847. It contains a few references to the Library which cast considerable light on the way in which the stock was acquired (153). First, the requisition was forwarded, often twice per annum and usually in March and September. The first surviving letter is typical of the later ones.

"Royal Hospital
Plymouth 18 March 1839

Sir,

We have the honor (sic) to enclose for your approval a List of Books for the Library at this Hospital which though short, will we presume exceed in value the remainder of the annual sum to be expended for this Purpose during the current year and to meet which therefore such may be readily selected as will make up the required amount.

David J. H. Dickson, Physician
Robert Armstrong, Surgeon"

This letter is exceptional in that a copy of the list of books was actually appended:

"Report of the 7th meeting of the British Association
Coplands Dictionary of Practical Medicine part 6th
Craigies Practice of Physic vol 2nd
Parker on Morbid States of the Stomach
Nichol's Architecture of the Heavens
Willis on Urinary Diseases
Evans on Endemic Fevers of the West Indies
Furnival on Consumptive Disorders
Farr's Medical Almanac for 1839
Brigham on the Influence of Religion on Health & Physical Welfare
Rowland on Neuralgia
Traills Physical Geography
Transactions of the Geographical Society
Thomsons Chemistry of Organic Bodies
Professor Powel's Connexion between Natural and revealed Truth
Granvill on Counter Irritation
Carpenters Principles of General and Comparative Physiology"

As the Library could be used not only by the Hospital's medical staff but also by medical officers from ships of the Royal Navy which happened to be in port, it was important to build up a considerable collection of medical geography works, and this explains the geographical items in the above list. Otherwise, the requests seem to have been what might be expected. Requisitions were normally acknowledged promptly, the

above requisition of 18 March being answered as follows on 26 March:

> "Dept. of the Phys. Gen. of the Navy
>
> Admy 26th. March 1839
>
> Sir
>
> I herewith transmit an Invoice of Books, also sent herewith, for the service of the Library at Plymouth Hospital; and I request you will cause the usual certificate of the State of the Books, to be made on the said Invoice and then return it to me.
>
> W. Burnett
>
> P.S. The books will be sent in <u>two</u> parcels."

The receipt of the books was first acknowledged by the Resident Commissioner at the Hospital - "The Medical Officer will accordingly examine the Books and attach the requisite Certificate to the Invoice" - and later by the Physician and Surgeon:

> "R.N. Hospital 28 March
>
> These are to certify that we have examined the Books comprised in the above Invoice, which appear to be complete and in good order."

In many cases the only references in such letters to specific works occurred only because a page by page and plate by plate check had revealed some defect, or the wrong item had been supplied.

The problem of keeping within the bookfund (presumably a straight £50 : £50 split between Haslar and Plymouth Hospitals) was a perpetual one, because of the lack of local information about current book prices. One letter dated 26 July 1840 explained this difficulty as being the reason why the requisition:

> "... may have exceeded the anticipated amount: but it can readily be diminished by the omission of such as you may think fit to expunge and especially of some of the most expensive works by which it would be considerably reduced, such as Cooper on the Breast, Farr on the Liver, Granville, Hawkins, Tyrell, Westwood, etc. Many of the other books inserted being in continuation of those already in this Library they necessarily swell the list much as it would be desirable to have all such parts as have been published since our last requisition."

The value of the books supplied on the requisitions does not seem to have exceeded their allocation, whether by accident or design; examples of invoice totals are sometimes included in the correspondence, such as £16.10.6 in September 1841; on 9 March 1842 the Admiralty requested a requisition "to the amount of Ten Pounds"; the bill in December 1842 was £18.13.6; and on 28 March 1845 the large sum of £40.1.3. The books

were supplied to the Admiralty Office by A. Varnham, who seems to have been Arthur Varnham, a London stationer who appears in London commercial directories between 1835 and 1858, and whose firm continued as Varnham & Co. from 1859 to 1870 (154). The rapidity of the supply of books from London to Plymouth is quite remarkable; the example quoted above, in which the order was 18 March and the books were despatched on 26 March and received and certified on 28 March, is not exceptional. Different methods of transport were used to send the books to Plymouth, probably depending at least in part on the size of the consignment. Large consignments were shipped from Deptford, small consignments by mail coach, until the extension of the railway into the Southwest. Despite such a rapid transmission of library materials, there were disadvantages in periodicals being forwarded from London, and from 1845 arrangements were made to purchase at least some of them locally. The Admiralty in a letter dated 6 June 1845 invited the Physician to forward details of periodicals which might be better supplied locally, and in the reply, dated 13 June 1845, it appears that the Stonehouse bookseller Mr. Cole was already supplying some quarterly and monthly journals, and he now offered to supply book continuations regularly, and parts of the *Lancet* at reduced prices.

The Library experienced healthy growth through regular purchases supplemented by occasional donations, such as a 21 volume *Dictionnaire de Medicine* which had been presented to the Physician-General's Department in 1844, and works were presented by authors such as Beaufoy, Sir Gilbert Blane, G. J. Guthrie, as well as occasional miscellaneous official publications. All of these early donations were overshadowed by the two large groups of additions made as the result of bequests by Dr. Robert McKinnal and Dr. Leonard Gillespie of their libraries to Sir William Burnett in trust for the Libraries of Haslar and Plymouth Hospitals.

9.4.3 The bequest of Dr. Robert McKinnal, R.N.

The Medical Library at Plymouth Hospital contains 70 works plus five volumes of M.D. theses, all bearing a special label stating that "This work forms part of about 600, bequeathed by the late Dr. Robert McKinnal, Surgeon R.N." (Fig. 40). This is only a part of the bequest, for his books were divided between Plymouth and Haslar;

and so, in order to learn something about Dr. McKinnal from his personal library it was necessary to take into account the Haslar books. A visit to Haslar Library and a volume-by-volume check of its contents revealed that the Haslar Library contains 112 works and three volumes of M.D. theses. If these surviving works are translated into individual items, it is possible to account for about 500 of the 600 items which McKinnal left in an unbound state on his death in 1838; this is a comparatively high percentage, about 80% of his personal library, so it can be expected to reveal something about the tastes and interests of its former owner.

The actual number of works which survive is 182, excluding the theses. These were examined from the aspect of date, subject and language. The date analysis showed that McKinnal had something of an antiquarian taste, with three sixteenth-century items, and a total of about one sixth of the surviving volumes being pre-1750. Less than one half were medical works. One third consisted of literature, mainly classics and French literature. Less than one sixth were on science, and there were a few works on religion and philosophy and miscellaneous subjects. A particular feature is that less than 25% of the works were in English. McKinnal appears to have been something of a linguist, with at least a fluent reading ability in five languages. The main surprise was to find that 70 works,38%, were in French; the 53 in Latin were not unusual; there were five Greek and Latin texts; eight Italian works, and three German works. His library suggests that Dr. McKinnal was a man of some scholarship, with a strong taste for modern literature as well as the subject interests in medicine and allied sciences which might be expected of a naval surgeon. Who was he?

Biographical information on Dr. McKinnal is sparse. He does not appear to have been a particularly well-known naval surgeon, and he never achieved seniority as a physician. Most of the information which follows has been culled from his service record (155). He was born in about 1789 (156), but the first definite trace of him was his appointment in 1810 as an Assistant Surgeon to *Scipion*, in which he saw service in the East Indies and the Mediterranean; he achieved his seniority in August 1815 and was appointed to *Harpy*, which was paid off in March 1816, leaving him on half pay. It seems that he then went to

Edinburgh University to study for his M.D., which he received in 1818. The course at the University covered the medical subjects and related subjects which are well represented in McKinnal's library, and he evidently collected a number of his books at that period as textbooks in anatomy and surgery, chemistry, botany, materia medica and pharmacy, the theory and practice of medicine, and clinical medicine. There was a series of oral and written examinations, all conducted in Latin, and the Aphorisms of Hippocrates were particularly singled out for attention; this explains older editions of Hippocrates in his library, and the classics which were essential steps in gaining fluency in Latin. A thesis had to be written, and McKinnal's subject was *De dysenteria Indiae Orientalis*, in which he drew from his Java experience. It seems as though he made good personal relationships with his fellow classmates, for in his library are the theses of no less than 84 of the 103 Edinburgh University medical graduates of 1818 (157). Most of them were endorsed with the author's compliments to Dr. McKinnal.

For a while, all track of McKinnal's whereabouts is lost, but he evidently spent some time in Paris, for the inscription in one of his books, Chenier's *Tableau historique*, shows that it was given to him in Paris on 2 January 1822 by Dr. Leonard Gillespie. McKinnal's library contains so many works published in Paris in the 1820s that it seems likely that he lived (and presumably worked) there for a few years. On his service record is a definite reference to the fact that on 13 September 1826 he reported that he had returned from Paris and was ready for active service. Shortly afterwards he was appointed to the *Sybille*, on which he remained until 24 May 1830, stationed for most of the time on the west coast of Africa, where the crew suffered exceptionally badly from epidemics of yellow fever. It was at this time that an Assistant Surgeon gave an eyewitness account of an incident in which he said of McKinnal: "A more deliberate act of cool moral courage can hardly be conceived; ..." (158) The ship was forced to quit her station before her time of commission had expired, and on 24 May 1830 McKinnal was again paid off, and went on half-pay. At no time does he appear to have had any financial resources other than his earnings, and it seems likely that his book purchases were carefully chosen to give him pleasure especially when at sea for long periods. This probably explains the literature and the several languages.

It was after completing his last voyage that McKinnal became ill and by 1831 was unfit for active service. He remained in Bayswater where he was visited in 1832 by Dr. Gillespie, who then gave him a copy of Bennet's *Tabidorum theatrum*. By 1836 he was boarding with a kindly landlady who nursed him until his death from consumption on 28 September 1838, aged 49 years. He was unmarried, and perhaps something of a solitary, who evidently cared deeply about the Navy. It is not known whether he and Dr. Gillespie influenced each other in their respective bequests, but it seems quite likely. McKinnal's instruction about his books was very explicit:

> "I give and bequeath unto Sir William Burnett, Physician General of the Navy, the whole of my books on Medicine on the Sciences connected with it and on Natural History as well as all other books whatever which may belong to me at the time of my decease for the purpose of augmenting the libraries of the Royal Naval Hospitals of Haslar and Plymouth or the library of either of the hospitals exclusively at his discretion and I beg that Sir William Burnett will be pleased to cause these books to be distributed or bestowed for the purpose above mentioned in such a manner as in his opinion will be the most conducive to the good of His Majesty's Service." (159)

Sir William Burnett reported the bequest to the Board of Admiralty on 6 February 1839. He described it as:

> "... in general valuable ... but as many of them are unbound and the sum at present inadequate even for the general service of the Museum I hope their Lordships will be pleased to add £100 to the present sum asked for these valuable institutions." (160)

It is evident from the context that in referring to "Museum " Burnett actually meant the Library bookfund, and probably the word "Museum" was intended to signify the comprehensive service. Their Lordships agreed to the extra expenditure, and the books were bound. A list of the books was sent to the Plymouth Hospital with instructions that a cross should be placed against the works already in the Library and returned to the Admiralty. The division of books between Haslar and Plymouth then took place, and on 5 October 1839 three boxes of McKinnal books were sent to Deptford to be forwarded to Plymouth, where they arrived and were receipted on 2 November 1839 (161).

9.4.4 The bequest of Dr. Leonard Gillespie R.N.

The name of Leonard Gillespie is known to historians and naval historians because of the survival of his letters describing his

life with Nelson on board *H.M.S. Victory*. His biography has been written by Keevil and others (162), but one aspect of Dr. Gillespie has remained virtually unstudied, and that is his contribution to the early development of the naval hospital medical libraries at Plymouth and Haslar by the bequest of his medical books for their use.

Gillespie was born in Armagh in 1758, apprenticed to a doctor in 1772, and passed for Second Mate on a naval ship in 1777. After serving on the West African Coast, West Indies, and New York, he became Surgeon at St. Lucia and then Antigua. In 1784 he studied in Paris for several months, the first of several visits. In 1795 He received an M.D. at St. Andrews, and in 1796 was appointed to Martinique. On August 1804 he received his seniority as Physician of the Mediterranean Fleet, sailing with Lord Nelson on the *Victory*. In 1805 he retired from active service in the Navy, and was on half-pay from 1809 but never recalled. He settled in Paris, and died there in 1842.

In 1785 Gillespie began a series of diaries, some of which have survived (163). They include frequent references to his current reading and occasional references to the purchase of books and journals, including some from secondhand catalogues. In the early days of his career he could not afford to buy many books, but by about 1800 he had become very wealthy and could afford to indulge his taste for books, building up a considerable collection.

As early as 1802 he intended to bequeath his books to benefit the naval medical service. In his diary entry dated 4 October 1802 he wrote that he had made his Will, leaving "all my books for the establishment of a library for naval surgeons at Portsmouth." Apparently he must have changed his mind later, perhaps hoping that his son would wish to take up the medical profession and appreciate his father's books; but many years later he returned to his original idea, for Sir William Burnett reported to the Lords of the Admiralty on 31 December 1839 that:

> "In consequence of the public attention given to the legacy of books from Dr. McKinnal, Dr. Leonard Gillespie has told me that he will add a codicil to his Will, leaving his Library to me in trust for the Libraries of Haslar and Plymouth." (164)

In a new Will dated 5 May 1840 Gillespie bequeathed his books in the following terms:

> "... all my medical books for the use of the Medical Libraries now established or to be established in the Royal Hospitals." (165)

It will be seen that his bequest was clearly confined to his medical books; the remainder of his large collection of books, journals and manuscripts were bequeathed to his family. After Gillespie's death in 1842 Sir William Burnett reported that the bequest consisted of "about 800 medical books, many unbound and all requiring to be rebound." (166). This figure of 800 seems likely to have been a clerical error, for the figure which is mentioned on the special bookplate is 400, and a lower sum was allocated to bind them than had been recently agreed for Dr. McKinnal's books, viz. £50 instead of £100. Lists of the books were sent to Plymouth and Haslar to be checked against existing library holdings, and delays were incurred through the binder losing the first set of lists so that the exercise had to be repeated! At last, on 31 January 1844, Sir David Dickson was able to reply:

> "We have the honor (sic) herewith to return the duplicate list of books bequeathed by the late Dr. Gillespie, and conformably with your directions, we have placed the letter P against such as are already in the Library, as far as we can identify: but from the Author's name not being appended in some instances or from their not being of the same name (the Title having been abbreviated, and perhaps inaccurately given) in others we cannot, (particularly where neither the name nor the subject is mentioned) in all such cases identify the Work to which the list refers." (167)

On 25 March 1844 the Plymouth consignment of two boxes of books was despatched by land carriage from London, and the invoice was receipted at Plymouth on 11 April 1844 (168).

Unlike the McKinnal bequest, from which over 80% of items have survived, less than one half of Dr. Gillespie's books have been identified at Plymouth and Haslar, and Plymouth has the smaller of the two collections. The books consist of several early printed medical books; 17% of the surviving works were printed before 1699, 56% were eighteenth-century publications, particularly numerous from 1770 when Gillespie began his medical training, and about 27% were acquired in the first quarter of the nineteenth-century, but very little after about 1825 when Gillespie had probably begun to lose an active interest in his profession. Gillespie's professional education and training had taken place during the declining years of the old practice of using Latin as the common language in the medical profession, and about half of his books are in Latin. Nearly one third are in French, reflecting his long residences in Paris; Gillespie acknowledged in his diary that he was a francophile, and he was evidently bilingual.

9.4.5 Sir David Dickson and the early Medical Library to 1847.

So far, it has been established that the Medical Library actively began in about 1833 by the Admiralty through the Medical Department of the Navy, some eight years after it had first been considered and approved in principle. The nucleus of the books had been purchased by 1835 with a comparatively generous foundation grant and large initial annual bookfunds. This early Library had experienced a large increase in stock from the McKinnal and Gillespie bequests, which must have almost doubled its size. The latter two bequests account almost completely for the surviving pre-1800 books, and for the unexpected surviving items such as Italian literature. A handful of other books, donated by Sir David Dickson, account for the outstanding unexpectedly early medical books; this small number of 13 positively identified and 8 strongly probable works associated with Dr. Dickson are very important to the Medical Library, for their owner was the man who effectively took charge of the Library from its beginning to 1847, when he retired. Nothing was known about this man before the author found the inscriptions in the Library's books and was able to associate the name with the Superintending Physician of the Hospital whose letter-book has been quoted from, and who was revealed by early *Navy lists* to have joined the Hospital in 1824, so that he was there during the foundation years of the Library. This circumstantial evidence of his connection with the Library led to an investigation by the author into the biography and character of the man. This has been detailed in a published paper (169), from which the following brief details have been drawn.

David Dickson was born in 1780, the youngest son of a minister who lived in Roxburghshire. He had no private means, and had to take up a career in which success would depend upon his own efforts and abilities. He was apprenticed to a surgeon, and gained his Licence from the Royal College of Surgeons Edinburgh in 1798. He then began his career in the naval medical service, as Surgeon's Mate. He took part in active service, and from 1808 onwards he consistently used his recent experience in the articles he began to publish. First, however, he had to gain qualifications which would give him respectful professional attention. In 1799 he had gained the rank of Surgeon, and in less than ten years of varied experience, particularly in the West Indies, he was

made Acting Physician of the Leeward Islands Squadron. This had been possible because of Dickson's acquisition of an M.D. from King's College ~~University~~, Aberdeen in 1806; the degree had been obtained by the still continuing custom of recommendation which was recognised,even if less favourably,at that time. Two physicians of Rochester in Kent attested that Dickson's "character, education and professional abilities" made him a worthy recipient of the M.D. Dickson evidently hoped that his position as Acting Physician would be upgraded to full seniority as Physician, and it was in this context that his first article was published, probably designed to lend support to his ambition. He was successful, and from that time onwards he seems to have lost no opportunity to forward his career through further articles and building up useful contacts; for he was dependent upon his earnings, and had a wife and young children to support not long after he was paid off and placed on half-pay in 1812. He set up a civilian practice in the fashionable area of Bristol, for this was permitted by naval regulations on certain conditions. At Bristol he gained a high reputation amongst his medical colleagues, which also seems to have been shared more widely because of favourable comments in the medical press on his articles. He was very clearly a man of considerable ability and personality, and his writings show that he was very well aware of current medical literature. It is doubtful, however, that he could personally have acquired much literature apart from a few important textbooks and the *Medico-chirurgical journal*. While in Bristol he acquired books which had belonged to two noted local physicians, but whether through purchase or as gifts is not known. When Dr. Dickson was appointed Physician to the Royal Naval Hospital in 1824, he brought with him a few cherished medical books, a wide-ranging and sound knowledge of medical literature, and the goodwill and friendship of the Physician-General, Sir William Burnett; it seems likely that the prospect of a medical library being established at Plymouth Hospital would have appealed strongly to this man who was described even by an irreverent junior as being "a clever old Scotchman",(despite an incident when Dickson had dined too well and tried to take the pulse of the leg of an empty bed (169)). In 1834 Dr. Dickson was knighted, somewhat belatedly, for his services in the West Indies; he was evidently at the top of his profession and no longer needed to struggle to make himself known for career advancement. He seems to have published comparatively little since moving to Plymouth, but this might have been because of pressure of work there as well as a diminution in need for publicity.

On 27 July 1847 he retired, after a few years of ill health, and he died on 2 January 1850.

The evidence points very strongly indeed to Sir David Dickson having played an important part in the founding of the Medical Library and its establishment. To start with, some of his books bear the early stamp which shows that they were added to the Library by 1835, showing an early interest. In all probability, he was likely to have already been placed in charge of the Library. His letterbook from 1839 onwards shows that he and the Surgeon signed the letters to the Physician General about the Library; and it has already been shown from the Physician General's reports that the Surgeon was in charge of the Museum, so it appears that although the two officers had to work closely, and the Surgeon was effectively the Physician's deputy, it was the Physician who had the main responsibility for the Library. It is interesting to note that many of the works purchased in the nucleus collection were ones which had been referred to by Dickson in his many articles. Rees' *Cyclopaedia*, a 39-volume work published in 1819-20, was a work for which he had expressed his admiration, and it was one of the first acquisitions of the Library (shown by the accession stamp). By 1839 he was definitely deeply involved in the Library, which was available for consultation by the hospital medical staff and naval medical officers from any ships in port. It seems likely that the Catalogue had been established, in a subject arrangement indicated by the evidence from the surviving books, and in accordance with the instructions on this matter which had been issued to Haslar in 1827. The books were probably also arranged on the shelves in the same subject order, as was indicated by the analysis of shelfmarks already described. The arrival of the McKinnal and Gillespie bequests probably doubled the size of the stock within the period 1839-1844, and might have suggested to Dickson the need for an additional record of the stock, for it seems likely that it was in about 1844 that accession numbers were used, not only on new works purchased, but retrospectively on the existing Library stock. That procedure appears to have come to a halt in 1847, and it seems likely that it was more than chance which makes this coincide with the retirement of Sir David Dickson in July of that year; the most likely explanation seems to be that he had implemented a procedure which his successors did not carry on. It was probably either at his retirement in 1847 or on his death in 1850 that a few more of his books found

their way into the Library's stock.

9.4.6 The Medical Library 1847 - 1914

Not much is known about the Library after the retirement of Sir David Dickson. The profile of publication dates of surviving books in Fig. 38 has matched very closely the authentic history of the Library, and if the profile is taken as a guide to the later history of the Library it would seem that a decline set in during the 1870s and a trough existed from 1880 - 1914. This seems to be indicated again as the probable pattern if the financial provision in the *Navy estimates* is examined. These show that the £100 p.a. for the purchase of books and specimens for Haslar and Plymouth continued until 1876-7, in which year the same sum had to be spread to include Chatham Marine Infirmary. In 1882-3 the money had to be spread even more thinly, to cover books and specimens for the Library and Museum at Haslar and books for the Libraries at Royal Naval Hospitals and Infirmaries at home and abroad. The *Navy appropriations* for 1882-3 and 1883-4 show that in spite of this extra demand on the allocated £100, only £82.0.6. and £66.11.1. were spent in the respective years. Thereafter, no special provision was identified in *Navy estimates*, and it looks as though the small sums being expended on books by each hospital or infirmary were expected to be taken from the Contingency Account, which in 1886-7 covered "postage, advertisements, chapel allowances, and other small expenditure including purchase of medical newspapers." Plymouth Hospital's allocation for contingencies was £90 1882-3, £84 in 1884-5, and £80 in 1886-7, so the Library seems unlikely to have much money for periodical subscriptions, binding, and book purchase. This seems to fit very closely to the apparent profile of stock acquisition, and some direct evidence which was available to Captain Lewis in 1963 but has since disappeared.

> "The first definite record is in a 'Register of Books received into the Library' and dated 27th October, 1871, with the added superscription, 'Books bound during period of a/c M.D.G. order 15th April, 1890.'
>
> The first entries are over the initials 'R.U.' who remained in charge until 1880, when 'J.W.R.' took over until 1st August, 1888, when 'J.M.D.', the last signatory, carried on till 1899. It has not proved possible to identify these librarians, but it is certain that they were not the S.R.A.'s secretaries for the period or hospital medical officers, as names with these initials do not appear in the Navy List of

> that date. From this Register, however, it is known that periodicals were purchased regularly and bound in fine leather covers, once a year, at a cost of about £10." (170)

This description ties in very closely with the evidence from the surviving books, which suggested that binding of books - and to some extent the acquisition of books - had declined from 1880 onwards but that some periodicals continued to be acquired. The Storekeeper's Accounts Book (171) for the period 1896-1903 has survived, and shows the actual sums expended from the Contingency Account on literature. Each quarter the Storekeeper paid E. Tucker 12s. 8d. for "Medical Journal for Hospital", and the same amount "do. Roy. Mar. Infirmary." Several references in the accounts do mention the word "books", but these were the Muster Books and other statistical returns which the Hospital had to supply to London on a regular basis. The only entries which might have related to the Medical Library are as follows:

1897	2 Mar.	Wm. Derry & Co.	Carriage of case of books for binding	2s. 4d.
	27 July	do.	Carriage of condemned books	£2.2s. 9d.
1902	9 Jan.	Doidge & Co.	Purchase of map	1s. 0.

The "condemned books" might have been books from the wards, used by the patients, for patients in the naval hospitals benefitted from the Seamen's Libraries which will be described in Chapter 10. The Storekeeper did enter two items in accounts other than the Contingency Account; on 30 November 1899 Rev. C.J. Todd, the Chaplain, was refunded 2s. from Appropriation in Aid for a library book which had been lost, and on 20 February 1902 a Mr. Baker was paid £7.5.6 from the Provisions and Stores Account for making a bookcase. Neither of these can be proved to relate to the Medical Library.

There is no evidence to suggest that the Library was moved from the original site in the period up to 1914, and the interpretation of the early references to the Library's location do point to the same accommodation as that in which it was described by an eyewitness, now deceased, who was quoted by Captain Lewis:

> "The site of the Library in its early years is unknown, but for many years it was in the Patients' Concert Room, now the Central Duty Office in Trafalgar block, and was known to be there in 1915. This seems a curious locale, but there is still one hospital employee, Mr. Kingswell of the Surgeon Rear Admiral's office, who had dealings with it and to whom I am indebted for much information. He says that even then it was

> hardly ever used and no one took any apparent interest in the preservation of the more valuable books. The Library in those days was stowed in handsome tall black bookcases picked out with gold lines and with glass fronts, and Mr. Kingswell clearly remembers the periodical mustering of the books by the Surgeon Rear Admiral's secretary, whose duty it then was." (172)

Thus, by the terminal date of this study, the Medical Library at the Royal Naval Hospital at Stonehouse was well into the decline which continued until World War II injected fresh urgency into the acquisition of surgical literature, only to decline again for a few years until it was determined, on the two hundredth anniversary of the Hospital's foundation, to re-establish the Medical Library. But why was there a decline from about 1880 onwards? The reason for this is not totally clear, but it is suspected that the growth of the medical profession and the facilities of borrowing from large central libraries such as the British Medical Association was one factor, and the availability of professional journals through membership of professional bodies another; the fall in book prices, which made it possible for more people to buy their own copies; the success of Lewis's specialist commercial subscription libraries, the improvement of medical education and libraries connected with educational institutions, perhaps even in a small way the growth of public libraries - all of these probably contributed to a diminishing need for the Medical Libraries at the Hospitals at that period. There was also the possible factor that the improved provision by the Admiralty of literature for seamen and the extension into token provision for officers of essential reference works might have also reduced the need for medical officers from ships to use the Hospital Libraries to their former extent. It is unfortunate that so few records appear to exist in the Libraries themselves, for it will only be as a result of such primary evidence that anything more is likely to be found about the early medical libraries serving the medical officers of the Royal Navy, of which Plymouth was one of the two most important establishments.

9.5 MINOR MEDICAL BOOKCLUBS AND SOCIETIES OF THE THREE TOWNS

9.5.1 Western Medical and Chirurgical Society

It seems possible that the original reason for founding this Society in Plymouth might have been the contemporary exclusiveness of the Plymouth Medical Society, and the desire by some of the considerable number of local medical men to benefit from similar arrangements for the circulation of medical literature. So little has come to light about this Society, that it seems best to quote the main source, a description in a guidebook of 1825, verbatim.

> "This society was formed on the 23rd February 1824, by several of the leading professional gentlemen of the three towns. The first object of this society consisted in getting the most approved journals, reviews, and other publications connected with the practical or collateral branches of medicine and surgery. The second in collecting together the scattered elements of local intelligence, with the laudable desire of improving the art and science of curing diseases.
>
> This society has heretofore held its meetings and kept its books at the Plymouth Eye Infirmary, where a room has been granted for that purpose by the governors of that excellent institution, through the intercession of the society's secretary Dr. Butter.
>
> Many valuable cases and communications have already been submitted to the notice of its members; and amongst other subjects, that of the disease which proved so fatal to many mechanics of our dockyard, in 1824, has been clearly elucidated.
>
> A society of this description exists in London, and Edinburgh, and it is highly praiseworthy in the faculty of Plymouth to have formed 'the Western Medical and Chirurgical Society', which consists of ordinary, extraordinary, and corresponding members." (173)

The same source lists Dr. J. Butter as the President so it appears that he held the presidency and secretaryship jointly. The Librarian is named as Dr. E. Blackmore. A directory for 1830 still lists Dr. Butter as President but Mr. Gabriel as Librarian (174). No further references have been found to this Society, but there is a little circumstantial evidence to suggest what might have happened. Dr. Butter was one of the two joint founders of the Eye Infirmary in 1821. He had become an Extraordinary Member of the Plymouth Medical Society in 1818, and the latter seems to have experienced some problems with the circulation of new books and periodicals, which would have been suffered most acutely

by the Extra-ordinary Members, who took their turns after the Members until some duplicate subscriptions were eventually arranged. There might therefore have been an element of dissatisfaction with the older Society in the formation of the younger one; or the latter might have been formed as a lever to cause improvements to be made to the former. Certainly the Plymouth Medical Society enlarged the number of newly-renamed Associates in 1826 although the limit was not removed until 1836. Dr. E. Blackmore, the new Society's first Librarian , had become an Associate of the Plymouth Medical Society in 1826, although that does not necessarily mean that he withdrew from the Society at that time. Dr. Butter is an interesting case; he was elected a Member of the Plymouth Medical Society in 1841, but his name did not appear in either of the periodical and book circulation registers of 1836, or in another revised pre-1845 edition, and this implies that he had other sources of supply. However, his name does appear on the Plymouth Medical Society circulation lists for both books and periodicals in 1845. It seems possible that the enlargement and improvement of the Plymouth Medical Society might have rendered the younger Society superfluous, for their objectives were virtually identical, and perhaps the W. M. C. S. ceased to exist by about 1845. It is interesting to note that the local guidebook by Carrington, which ran into several editions, mentions the Society in 1828 and 1830, but not in the 1837 and later editions. Another possibility, of course, is that membership crumbled because of competition from one of the two organisations to be mentioned next, but this seems unlikely, for the W. M. C. S. was Plymouth-based, and the other two were centred at Devonport.

9.5.2 The Devonport and Stonehouse Medical Society

The origin and history of this Society is obscure, but by 1838 it was definitely in existence, for a letter from this Society was quoted in the business proceedings of the Plymouth Medical Society on 9 February 1838 (175). The Devonport Society's Secretary had sent a resolution, relating to professional ethics, which he requested the Plymouth Medical Society to support. The resolution was signed by 32 medical men, presumably members of the Society, of whom one third can be also identified as being Members or Associates of the Plymouth Medical Society at that time. The remaining two thirds would by 1838 have been eligible to be elected as Associates of the older organisation, and

the fact that they did not belong seems likely to be due in part, at least, to the geographical convenience afforded by a Devonport-based Society. The meeting place is not named, but a reasonable speculation is the Devonport Dispensary, and perhaps from 1863 the Royal Albert Hospital. There must have been such a centre, for by 1882 the Society had accumulated a library of about 700 volumes, which it transferred in that year to the newly opened Devonport Free Public Library, on condition that members had access to the volumes (176).

Other references in the minutes of the Plymouth Medical Society, on 9 April 1883, 27 January 1885, and 12 December 1887, suggest that the Devonport organisation was still in existence, although the references name the "Devonport Medical Society", probably a convenient contraction of the full name of the Society.

9.5.3 Plymouth, Stonehouse and Devonport Medical Reading Society

The only piece of evidence which has been found to prove that this Society existed is a printed copy of its *Rules* dated 1849 (177). The rules show a similarity to the Plymouth Medical Society in that the quarterly meetings were held in rotation at the home of each of the twenty members, when the host would be Chairman, but it was not a dining club - refreshments were strictly limited to tea, coffee, spirits and biscuits, in marked contrast to the Plymouth organisation. It also differed significantly from the Plymouth Medical Society in that it did not build up a permanent library, and was run very much as a medical bookclub.

The officers were elected annually and consisted of a President, Treasurer and Honorary Secretary. Membership was limited to twenty, and members were elected by ballot. The annual subscription was one guinea, payable to either the Treasurer or the Honorary Secretary, and it must be assumed that all books and periodicals were ordered and circulated through these same officers. Each member had the privilege of ordering a book or books not exceeding a total expenditure of ten shillings per annum, and he was entitled to the first reading of these items; but if he used this privilege it was on condition that he agreed to buy back the book at half of its original cost if no higher bid could be found at the (annual?) auction. It seems to be implicit

that the remaining funds were spent mainly on the periodicals, which were circulated on Mondays and Thursdays only, with the reading time restricted to three days. Books were circulated on Thursdays only, with a reading time of seven or fourteen days. Fines were levied for overdue returns at the rate of 2d. per day for a periodical, 1½d. for a book, with a limit of 2s. 6d. for a periodical and the cost of replacing a book.

No clue is given, apart from the title, as to the extent of membership of this Society. The *Rules* were printed by E. W. Cole of Stonehouse, instead of the Plymouth or Devonport printer which might be expected, but that is not significant because E. W. Cole was one of the more important printers at that date and would be likely to be used if the Society's Secretary at the time was resident or practising in the area - or even in the Royal Naval Hospital.

Unfortunately nothing more is known about the Society, but it is interesting to find that the medical profession in the Three Towns was capable of supporting three organisations connected with the collective provision of medical literature in the middle of the nineteenth-century.Or was it? It is already clear that there was overlap in membership between the Plymouth Medical Society and the Devonport and Stonehouse Medical Society in 1838, both of which provided current medical books and periodicals. Was there room for another society, or was the Plymouth, Stonehouse and Devonport Medical Reading Society connected in some way with the latter society for which no evidence has survived between 1838 and 1882? The latter's library was quite small in 1882 for an organisation which had existed for fifty years. It seems just possible that the Reading Society could have been a mid-century stage of that organisation, which perhaps developed from a book club into a society with a private library; it is to be hoped that one day there might be further light shed on these minor medical societies of the Three Towns.

9.6 LAW SOCIETIES AND THEIR LIBRARIES

9.6.1 PLYMOUTH LAW SOCIETY

Although the Library of the Plymouth Law Society only achieved a maximum size of some 3,000 volumes and was therefore small in comparison with the libraries of the better known provincial law societies, it has a claim to general interest in that it was one of the earliest provincial law libraries. It was established under the name Plymouth Law Library in 1815, which is earlier than the ones quoted by Breem in his review of professional law libraries of Great Britain:

> "Law societies had been established as early as the 18th century, but their libraries did not necessarily come into being at the same time. That of Birmingham was founded in 1818, Bristol in 1819, Manchester in 1820 and Liverpool in 1827. The creation of a library was one of the purposes behind the formation of the Law Society .... The Library itself was actually founded in 1828 .... Of the remaining law society libraries recorded, Exeter was founded in 1833, Cardiff in 1907." (178)

The foundation of Plymouth Law Library therefore antedates most, if not all, similar libraries, although no claim can be made to more than an early origin until more detailed studies have been produced of all such societies and libraries to enable criteria to be identified and comparisons made which would result in some more reliable rank order. The Plymouth Law Society itself claims to be the third oldest in the country (179).

The name of the Society has undergone a number of changes during its history. Founded as the Plymouth Law Library (P.L.L.) in 1815, in 1836 it became the Plymouth Law Society (P.L.S.); it was incorporated in 1871 to become the Incorporated Law Society of Plymouth (I.L.S.P.), but it was still generally known as the Plymouth Law Society, to which name it has reverted in 1981. These changes did not affect the Library itself, apart from changes of bookplates, and the Society will be more easily referred to as "the Society" in the following account.

The origin of this Society can once again be traced to the personal initiative of Henry Woollcombe, the founder of the Plymouth Institution and a founder member of the Plymouth Public Library.

His diaries relate in 1798 his personal experience of that general difficulty of professional men, how to obtain their specialist books and other reading materials in provincial towns. Writing in London, at the age of 21, when he was training to become a solicitor, he described how he had purchased a pamphlet *A treatise on the study of the law*, written by Lord Ashburton and others. The pamphlet laid down a course of study which Henry Woollcombe wished to pursue in so far as he was able (for he felt his deficiency in not being able to read Greek and Latin). He wrote:

> "But no sooner do I determine to undertake such a Plan as set down by the Noble Lords but a difficulty occurs to me that is not easily surmounted. Where am I to obtain (when settled at Plymouth) the numerous works mentioned in their Catalogue. I have no money to purchase, I have no Friends possessing them nor are there any public libraries where I can borrow them. This however I must devise means to overcome.... In the meantime and indeed during my residence in London I am unwilling to read Books that I now purchase or shall have means of coming at in Plymouth. And therefore perhaps shall not enter on the pursuit of my Plan at present, confining myself to the perusal of those Authors whose works I fear I may not be able to obtain at home." (180)

Although he evidently managed to overcome his problem in some way, it is easy to understand why he was instrumental in forming the Plymouth Law Library in later years when he felt the time was right. Perhaps the successful example of the Plymouth Medical Society and its growing library also encouraged the attempt. Most important of all, however, seems to be the existence of the Plymouth Public Library; only two years after the latter had moved into its new building, Henry Woollcombe became President. The policy of that Library was to exclude purely professional literature, although it acquired a few law books intended for the interested layman, but several solicitors and barristers were proprietors. The President, Henry Woollcombe, convened a meeting of these members on 13 June 1815, as the result of which they "formed themselves into a Society for founding and maintaining a Law Library" (181). Members had to contribute £5 in cash or books and pay an annual subscription of £1 (182). The Society elected a President, Treasurer, Secretary, and seven committee members annually in October. Members were admitted by ballot, but in order to be eligible for membership the prospective member had to be a proprietor or a subscriber of the Plymouth Public Library, as well as being in practice and resident in the Three Towns (183). The reason for the first membership

requirement of prior membership of the Plymouth Public Library was that from the beginning the Plymouth Law Library was housed in the building of the Plymouth Public Library, and the Librarian of the latter was also the Librarian of the Law Library. It would not have been practicable to have allowed access to the Law Library by members who did not belong to the accommodating Library. The Law Library was kept in the Committee Room on the ground floor until at least 1863 (184), but by 1885 had been removed to a room on the upper floor, where it was available from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. (185).

The actual membership seems to have been in the order of one third of the legal profession in the Three Towns, or possibly less. In 1885 there were only thirty three members (186) although the residential qualification had by then been extended to include residence within ten miles of Plymouth Guildhall; in 1881 there were 130 members of the legal profession in the Three Towns alone, according to the Census returns. The funds available for the purchase of books and periodicals was automatically governed by the income from subscriptions, and must consequently have been comparatively small. The growth of the Law Library must have been slow and steady, although details are lacking because this was yet another Library which suffered the complete destruction of its records in 1941. By 1836 the bookstock was nearly 600 volumes (187), an average net annual gain of 30 volumes which seems to have continued at the same average rate over the next few years, for in 1885 the stock was described as "about 2,000 volumes - law reports, statutes, and textbooks" (188). A "catalogue alphabetically arranged" (189) was printed in 1865, but no copy has survived. The size of the Library was evidently giving concern to the Plymouth Public Library by 1880 for the latter was short of space for its own stock, and the space must have begun to appear more attractive than the annual rental it received. One motion to eject the Law Library was defeated in 1879, but the less welcoming attitude to the Law Library plus their own experience of increasing difficulties in using their stock in a small space probably combined to bring about the decision to move. In 1887 the Society moved to rooms in Athenaeum Lane (190), and the long connection with the old Plymouth Public Library (Proprietary Library) was severed.

It is possible that some volumes were sold at this time and

the size slightly reduced thereby, for the next reference to the Law Library describes it as containing 1,000 volumes (191). As the publication making the statement was edited by the Borough Librarian, W.H.K. Wright, it must be assumed that he is likely to have known what the library was like, but, even allowing for the fact that the figure was clearly indicative and not intended to be exact, the total seems very low; for in 1901 the same writer described the collection to the Library Association Conference at Plymouth as holding about 2,500 volumes, and in no way can it be possible that the stock increased by a net annual average rate of 175 volumes between 1885 and 1901 to account for the discrepancy between these estimates. One possibility, of course, is that the earlier guide, dated about 1889, was a misprint or a mistake which escaped editorial correction; for the *Catalogue* published in 1901 provides evidence that the stock was then at least 1,750 volumes and could easily have been over 2,000 volumes, so that the 1901 verbal description of "about 2,500 volumes" was not too far out. Another possibility is that the figure of 1,000 represents works, including periodical titles as single works. However, there is some attraction in the idea that some stock might have been sold at the time of moving from one location to another, for it would help to explain how the Society could afford to bind, repair and rebind as much of its stock as evidently happened. The Society's income in 1885 had been £34. 13s., of which rent and other expenses absorbed nearly £20, leaving less than £15 to be spent on books and binding (192), and there is no reason to believe that the available income for books and binding suddenly increased towards the end of the century. Yet, the evidence of the stock which survived to 1982, (over 2,000 volumes which are currently waiting final disposal through the secondhand book trade), shows that a creditable amount of maintenance was devoted to the stock probably in this late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century period. Apart from publishers' bindings and cases, only a handful of the surviving volumes from the pre-1914 period have not been bound or repaired in one of the standard styles adopted by the Library. The exceptions are themselves mostly bound in calf and were published before 1860, probably forming some of the early acquisitions of the Library. The remaining volumes, the large majority of which were published before 1900, include many eighteenth-century and nineteenth-century items. Many are in half leather and buckram, or half buckram and paper boards, with a few in quarter leather and buckram. These

volumes nearly all contain the post-1871 bookplate (Fig. 42) which had evidently been attached after binding or rebinding and not affixed over an older bookplate; but the general impression is that the bulk of the bindings probably date from the period of a decade or so either side of the turn of the century, although small quantities evidently were continued in this century. Nothing can be proved, but it is a common practice for libraries to be examined more closely at the time of removal, and it seems possible that this might have happened in the Law Library. If so, the likely disposals would have been duplicate works and old editions of standard works, for the retention of as complete as possible sets of reports, digests, statutes, etc. were essential to the effective working of the Library. Whatever the source of the income, in 1900 the exceptionally large sums of £87 and £24 were spent on new books and binding respectively, probably inspired by the imminent visit of the Library Association Conference which included the Law Library among its visits! In 1901, the total sum earmarked for books and binding was reduced to £45 (193).

In 1905 the Society and its Library moved from Athenaeum Lane to the ground floor of the Plymouth Law Chambers in Princess Square, where it remained for many years. In 1912 the collection contained about 2,100 volumes, and the *Catalogue* printed in that year also contains the regulations under which the Library operated (194). The regulations mention the Librarian three times, and it must be presumed that the Society appointed either an Honorary Librarian or a part-time Librarian to administer its collection from the time it severed the connection with the Proprietary Library; it is not clear from the wording of the relevant regulations which of these courses had been adopted - or perhaps both expedients. The title Librarian was used in connection with issuing and shelving books; there was also one reference to "the Librarian or Curator" in connection with demand notices for fines. It is not impossible that the situation in 1912 was similar to that of recent years, in which a Member held the office of Curator (or Hon. Librarian) and a fulltime or parttime Librarian was employed to care for the Library on a day to day basis.

The regulations in 1912 permitted books to be borrowed only by Members or "by a person in the employ of and producing the written order of a Member", and a loans register was maintained in which the Librarian,

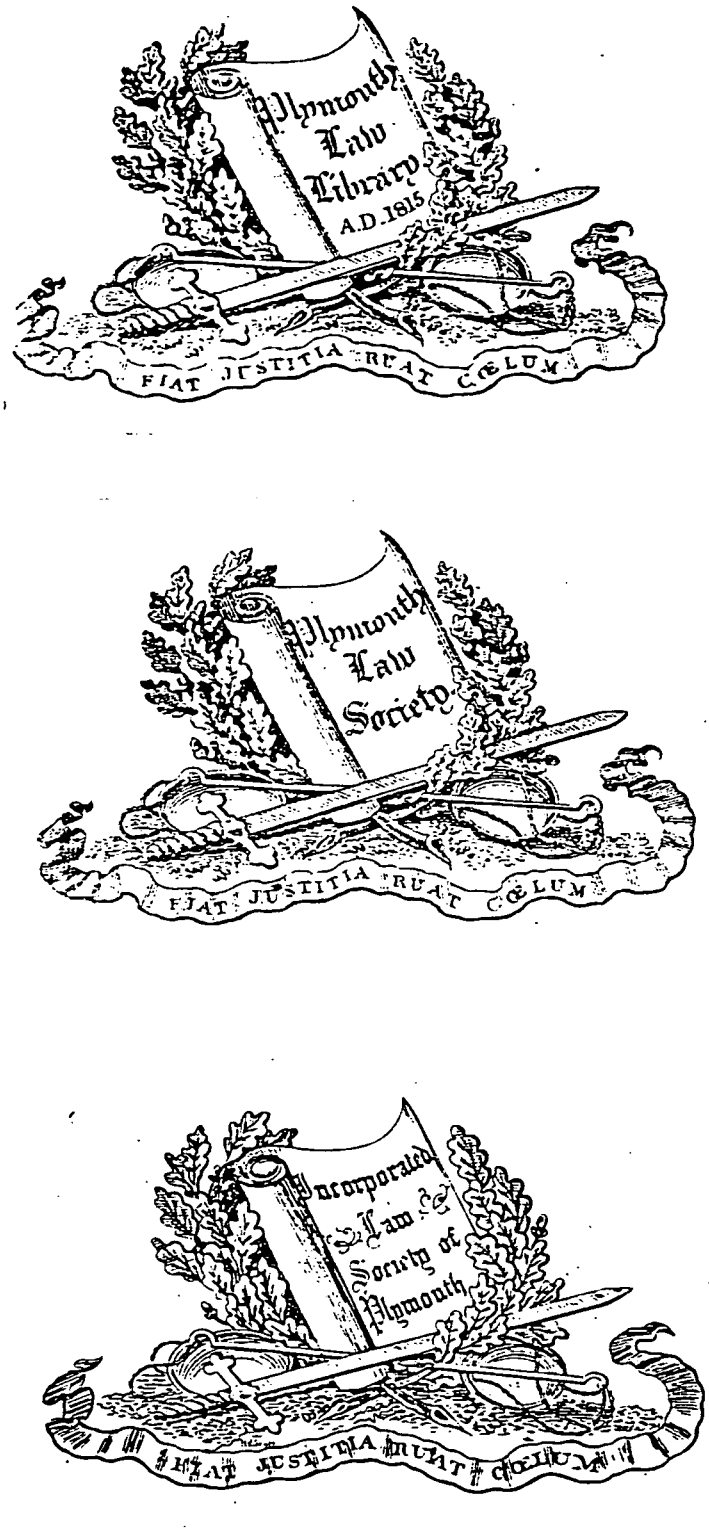


Fig. 42 Plymouth Law Society Library bookplates.

or in his absence the borrower, had to enter details of loans. Only the Librarian was permitted to replace books on the shelves. Loans were limited to three days, including the day of issue and return but excluding Sundays. No member could borrow more than three textbooks at any one time unless for bona fide use in a Court of Law. Fines of 1s. were imposed for every breech of the regulations, plus 6d. per day for overdue books, and if fines were not paid within seven days, the offender was debarred from the use of the Library. The Library was open every day "during the hours for which the Committee recommends Solicitors' Offices to be open, but may be closed from 1 to 2." Every September the borrowing facilities were suspended for three clear days during which the stock was checked by two members of the Committee. It is clear from these regulations that some kind of control over access to the Library was in operation, but this might have been exercised by someone in the general office of the Law Chambers in which the Library was situated, and not necessarily someone on duty in the Library itself.

The evidence of the surviving stock suggests that the bulk of it was acquired through regular subscription and purchase. Very few volumes show evidence of their provenance, although it is likely that some inscriptions were removed and destroyed when the volumes were rebound. Two volumes of Blackstone's *Reports 1801* bear the signatures of Joseph Pridham and a former indecipherable owner. Several volumes of Petersdorff's *Reports 1825-30* are signed Christopher V. Bridgman, solicitor of Tavistock. Both works could have been donations. Two definite donations, *Law chronicle 1855* and *Law student's magazine 1853*, were presented to the Library in 1909 by the Plymouth Stonehouse and Devonport Law Students' Society, which had a shelf of books within the Library.

The earliest hint about the organisation of stock appears to be the 1885 reference already mentioned of " .... 2,000 volumes of law reports, statutes and textbooks." These three categories are the natural divisions in the subject of Law, and the catalogues of 1901 and 1912 contain shelfmarks which have been reconstructed and confirm the arrangement. The 1901 *Catalogue* (195) revealed that in the Athenaeum Lane accommodation the Library had eight bookcases, A - H, of which A to F definitely had ten shelves and G and H at least nine shelves. The bookcases were evidently laterally adjacent, for the stock was

arranged in the order of shelves A1 to H1, followed by A2 to H2, and so on. These bookcases contained the reports sequence, the works being shelved in alphabetical order of author or title, whichever was most appropriate; folios were in E1O and F1O. There were in addition three bookcases I, J and K, consisting of six shelves each of periodicals and statutes. Bookcases O and P contained six shelves full of treatises and textbooks arranged in what appears to have been a rough subject order. Single shelves designated R1O, S1O and V1O contained a concentration of very old works, the oldest being West's *Simboleography 1610;* probably these separate shelves were some form of extra-secure location. The stock had to be rearranged into different bookcases when the Library moved to the Law Chambers. This time, there were four bookcases A to D, each with eleven shelves, of which the bottom rows A 11 to D 11 were reserved for oversize volumes. The reports sequence remained in its former alphabetical order, but was arranged in vertical shelf order, from A 1 - A 10, B 1 - B 10 etc. Shelves B 6, B 9 and B 10 contained statutes and bookcase D held a mixture of reports, digests, textbooks and periodicals. Four more bookcases E to H contained the textbooks and treatises in their former rough subject order, plus some periodicals and reports in G; bookcase H was devoted solely to *Solicitor's journal.*

The Society printed catalogues in at least the years 1865, 1901 and 1912, and possibly in other years of which no record survives. The 1865 edition does not seem to have survived, and all that is known about it is that it was "alphabetically arranged". The 1901 edition was a single alphabetical sequence containing entries for authors, subjects and series. The 1912 arrangement was different, consisting of eight sections which were evidently designed to give the user more detailed help. The first two sections consisted of the textbooks and treatises in alphabetical order of authors' names and subjects; the next two consisted of the reports, first by alphabetical order of compilers' names, then by the various Courts to which they related. The last four groups were: digests of reports; statutes; legal periodicals; and literature and miscellaneous books; and finally a very brief entry was made for encyclopaedias.

In 1914, the terminal date of this study, the Library was one year short of its centenary, and the evidence suggests that it was then a significant, large library, being actively used and maintained by members of the legal profession in the Three Towns and surrounding area.

9.6.2 Plymouth, Stonehouse and Devonport Law Students' Society

In about 1874 it was decided to set up the above-named Society, and in 1877 the *Rules* were printed. A copy of the rules has survived, together with the Society's *Minutes* from 1878 to 1923, and it is from these two sources that the following account has been reconstructed (196).

The Society was formed in about 1874 with the following objects:

> "... the discussion of all questions not of a religious character, preference being given to Legal and Jurisprudential subjects, the Cultivation of the Art of Public Speaking, Argument, and Advocacy, and the improvement of the Members in the Practice and Study of the Law."

There were three classes of members. The main class was Ordinary Member, consisting of students who intended to become barristers or solicitors, and the management rested with this class. Honorary Members were barristers, conveyancers and solicitors, and Extraordinary Members were those who did not fall into either of the first two classes. Admission was by ballot, one black ball in four to exclude. The Executive was elected annually and consisted of President, Treasurer, Secretary and two Members; the Honorary Members were eligible to be elected as President, but the other offices were filled by Ordinary Members. Subscription rates were low, as befitted the student status of most members - 5s. per annum, except Honorary Members who paid 10s. 6d.

It appears that for the first few years the Society had access of some kind to the Law Society's Library, although the latter was still in the Proprietary Library and evidently the students were not expected to belong to the latter. It is possible that the rule, stating that a 1s. fine would be levied "for taking away any Books or Reports from the Law Library which refer to the point for discussion at the next ensuing Meeting until the evening of the day of Meeting", might have been intended to apply only to Honorary Members. The Society did not establish a library of its own until 1880, when it was resolved to take £5 of the credit balance of £8, for:

> "... the formation of a legal library, which, through the generosity of a few gentlemen already numbers several volumes."

The establishment was delayed for a while because it was known that the Plymouth Incorporated Law Society was about to add to its Library, and there was no wish to risk the small capital sum on duplicating stock; but it was resolved to spend the money as soon as possible and to make such regulations as might be found necessary with regard to the lending of books. The only other reference to the Library in the next ten years was the subscription from at least 1882 to *Law student's journal* and to the Law Society. One interesting fact which also emerges in the same decade is that the membership of the Society became overwhelmingly that of Honorary Members instead of the Ordinary Members, viz. law students, for whom it had been intended. In 1880-1 there were 87 members of whom only 26 were in the Ordinary category; by 1884 the latter had declined from 29 to 14, and the future of the Society was threatened; but it evidently recovered.

In 1890 the Society wrote to the Plymouth Law Society, asking permission to keep its small collection of books on a shelf in the latter's Law Library, and permission was received on condition that:

> "... Library to be used during the hours and no use made of the Room by Students not articled to members of the Law Society for taking books from the Law Library."

In October 1890 the Society decided to purchase *Law gazette* for weekly circulation among members of the Society, and it was also resolved that the existing credit balance should be used by the Committee to purchase books and periodicals for the benefit of the Ordinary Members. In 1893 a curious reference is made to the "Librarian's fee":

> "The question of the Librarian's fee was then brought before the meeting and after some discussion it was settled to allow him 15/- (fifteen shilling) and not to engage him for the coming session until after the question had been throughly gone into with the proposed Library Rules."

This sounds as though there might have been a paid Librarian of the Law Society who requested payment for extra work incurred through the deposit of the Law Students' Society Library. Three weeks later the matter was sorted out:

> "The library rules were drawn up and passed and it was agreed to elect an Ordinary Member to fill the post of Honorary Librarian."

More books were added to the Library in 1894, and in 1896 the Honorary Librarian was authorised to dispose of surplus copies of any books in the Library; the first reference to binding also occurs in 1896, when it was decided to bind *Law notes* and *Law Society journal*. The Society

built up a useful collection of textbooks, although only very slowly, for typical purchases were seven new books in 1902 and the same number in 1903. In 1901 members were concerned about the Library, and a special sub-committee consisting of the President, Treasurer and Librarian were appointed to consider means of recovering library books and giving them better protection. In 1902 a library regulation was altered with the effect that in future:

> "No Volume shall be retained for more than 14 days including the days of issue and return unless an entry of renewal be made in the Register."

In 1903 a list of missing books was compiled by the Librarian and a copy was sent to each member, so it seems as though the problem identified in 1901 had not been resolved!

The next Library reference comes in the revised *Rules* which were printed in 1907-8, from which it appears that the Library was open 10 - 1 and 2 - 5 on weekdays, except Saturdays which were 10 - 1 only. Not more than two volumes could be borrowed, and these could be kept for fourteen days, with overdue charges of 3d. per volume plus 2d. per day. Borrowing was restricted to Ordinary Members or a person with a written order from an Ordinary Member, and particulars of the volumes borrowed were to be entered in the Register by the Librarian, or in his absence, the borrower; similarly, on return, the volumes were to be marked off in the Register. Each October the Honorary Librarian had to examine the books and report any deficiencies to the Committee; the Librarian was also empowered to obtain books during the summer months when the Society apparently suspended activities, provided he had the consent of a majority of the Committee. Occasional examples of the actual books which were purchased were noted in the *Minutes*, revealing that there was almost certainly some overlap with the Law Society's textbook and treatises section. The works were standard texts on subjects such as company law, torts, equity, criminal law, trusts, contract, common law and conveyancing.

These scanty scraps of information suggest that in 1914 the Society possessed a useful, albeit small, collection, which was actively used by law students in the Three Towns. In 1914 the Society decided to change its name to Plymouth Law Students Society on the same date that the amalgamation of the Three Towns took place.

CHAPTER TEN. THE LIBRARIES OF THE ARMED SERVICES

The libraries which have been described in the preceding chapters have been civilian libraries, and occasionally references have been made in their histories to the admission of military and naval personnel, usually specified as "officers." In the history of the Devonport Civil and Military Library it was found that this curious name had been acquired because of the merger of the former Garrison Library from the Citadel with its stock, and this was one of a few local clues that there must have been some libraries provided by or for the men of the Army, Navy and Royal Marines. The significance of that section of the population of the Three Towns was stressed in the occupation analyses in Chapter 2, where it was found that at times one person in every two or three adult males in Devonport or Stonehouse was a serviceman, and that the overall ratio in the Three Towns was as high as one in five, and not less than one in ten, during the nineteenth-century. The justification for paying special attention to the history of library provision for the Armed Services is therefore self-evident. Very little research seems to have been carried out into the history of Army, Navy and Royal Marine libraries, and so in order to find out more about the background against which the local findings could be set, it has been necessary to undertake considerable research amongst the primary sources of the history of naval and military government and administration. This has shown that there are problems concerned with the evidence for libraries which are unusual, and which affect the findings and presentation of material on the subject of the Armed Services libraries.

The problems centre around the nature of the records of the Services. The official establishment of libraries is a policy matter decided at Government level and given effect by means of General Orders from the War Office or Admiralty to the Commanding Officers. The rules for administering such libraries are thereafter laid down in the *Regulations* of the appropriate Service, and normally these rules and regulations concerning libraries also embody a requirement that reports or statistical returns should be made on the libraries by specified officers at specified intervals. Library books were treated similarly to other stores, for which there were extensive stock-check procedures. These reports and statistics were sent up to London as commanded, and

there are two consequences to this. Firstly, there is little or nothing left in the way of local archives relating to the libraries; and even if local library records did survive, such as issue registers or other documentation, it seems that they did not survive for long; it appears to be the general practice in service establishments to destroy non-current records in the interest of efficient administration, confident in the knowledge that records concerning personnel, equipment, stores, and any other important matters have been despatched to the central administration in London. Secondly, however, the original returns to the Admiralty and War Office are often no longer available for the pre-1914 period; or, the files have been so severely pruned before deposit in the Public Record Office that little remains of the comparatively unimportant details amongst which libraries seem to have been included. The financial records of *Estimates* and *Appropriations* are often not available in sufficient detail to reveal library expenditure. In recent years there have been official attempts to preserve anything which had escaped destruction and which formed part of the history of the individual Services. The appropriate libraries and museums of the Services have been contacted in the search for library records, with little success although the various archivists and curators were helpful and very interested in the author's attempt to piece together the history of the various Service libraries, which appears to be the first professional investigation into that subject. The general outcome of this problem over original source material seems to be that the nature of local libraries of the Armed Services has often to be interpreted in the context of the *Orders* and *Regulations* which govern the appropriate Service, upon the reasonable assumption that such orders and regulations were put into local effect as part of military and naval disclipline.

The second part of the problem of evidence arises from the inherent mobility of the service units such as regiments and ships; these might be present in an area such as the Three Towns for a short while, sometimes perhaps a few years as a military defence force or a guardship, sometimes only a few days, such as a regiment in transit or a ship calling into the port to pick up stores. This has a few implications. For example, after seamen's libraries had been established as a normal facility on each ship, it can be assumed that ships present at the Three Towns carried such facilities and that there

were therefore in the area a number of libraries which cannot be studied individually, only generically. There is also the strong probability that some of the men who made use of Army and Navy libraries, or who had some responsibility for overseeing them, such as captains, schoolmasters, or clergy, will have recorded occasional comment on the libraries, perhaps in letters, log books, diaries, regimental records, or any other private or official communication of a comparatively ephemeral nature. The recovery of that type of evidence is, however, virtually impossible at present, and would depend very much on the editing and indexing of such records in order to reveal any library information of a casual nature.

Nevertheless, despite the problems arising from the peculiar nature of the Services themselves, the author has considered that it is important to investigate in some depth the nature and extent of the libraries of the Armed Services in the Three Towns and their national context. There are few places in the country in which such major naval, military and marine establishments existed, and the Three Towns can perhaps be paralleled in this respect only by London and Portsmouth. If the subject of libraries for servicemen is to be researched, therefore, it is only in such an area as the Three Towns that they are likely to make a collective and noticeable impact on the library provision of the area. Consequently, not only have the few local scraps of evidence been carefully gathered, but a search has been made of the appropriate sources from which it has been possible to present a contribution towards filling a gap in the library history of the United Kingdom.

Before turning to each of the Services it might be helpful to summarise a few general findings which will help to put the individual Services in the wider context.

The establishment and growth of libraries for the general civilian population in the nineteenth-century has its roots largely in the growth of literacy and education for the working classes, and this is also true of the libraries for the Services. However, Service education is less well known than the history of civilian education, and it has usually been found necessary to begin the studies of the libraries with some introduction to the development of literacy

and education, for these eventually helped to produce the climate in which libraries were established for the ranks. As in civilian life, however, there were earlier libraries, privately established by the officers who formed the literate and educated equivalent to the civilian middle class. The broad pattern which seems to have been common between the three Services, although not necessarily contemporary with each other, is first the emergence of cooperative provision of schools and libraries as the result of local initiative by individual officers and captains. The libraries were usually for their own use; but the schools were for the benefit of the boys and adults recruited to the ranks but who were illiterate or had little use for books. Between the educated, commissioned, officers, and the ranks, were the non-commissioned officers, the lower grades of which were usually appointed from the ranks but who were required to be literate in order to be able to understand and transmit communications affecting their duties etc. The earliest official recognition of the need for education in the Services arose in connection with the need to educate the N.C.O.s for promotion, and the desirability of educating the boy recruits. Adult rankers were encouraged but not compelled to attend schools, but gradually incentives were provided for them to do so. This increase in general literacy together with the gradual introduction of examinations for promotion purposes led to the official establishment of libraries for education and recreation.

By the end of the nineteenth-century there were well-established systems of library provision in each of the three Services, and some attention was slowly being given to the improvement of the provision of professional literature, particularly technical literature for officers. Much of the emphasis, however, was still on the administrative routines of the library in response to the official statistical demands, rather than any real service, and the largely Victorian pattern of libraries seems to have been disrupted because of the new attitude to the servicemen's need for books which emerged in the First World War.

10.1 ARMY LIBRARIES.

The regular British Army is usually considered to have begun at the time of the Restoration of Charles II in 1660 (1). It consisted essentially of volunteers, for "pressed men" such as those compelled into the Navy could not be controlled and supervised in field conditions. The officers were men whose commissions had been purchased, until that system finally gave way in 1871 to career progression through a promotion system which involved examinations. The rank and file consisted of boys and men who had volunteered, and who were at first mostly illiterate or almost illiterate, having forgotten what they had learned at school, which they had probably left at an early age and long before enlisting. In between, there were the non-commissioned officers, an important middle group in the chain of command. There were Army libraries and schools in some regiments long before any official policy was established in these matters, but as the official system of libraries emerged as literacy began to increase among the troops and as educational attainments became an integral part of the promotion system, it is appropriate to begin by considering the educational system of the Army.

The first attempts to provide schools were made by a few individual officers who were particularly concerned to educate non-commissioned officers from the ranks. Colonels began to establish regimental schools and appoint schoolmasters to educate the N.C.O.s, with the earliest examples being in 1662 at Madras and 1675 at Tangier (2). The time available for the education of soldiers was limited because of their first priority of military drill and other duties, so it became the custom for the schoolmasters to educate the children of the soldiers to occupy their time. In eighteenth-century England regimental schools flourished, and two important orphanages for soldiers' children were established at Dublin and at Chelsea; the latter, known as the Royal Military Asylum, later became important in the history of military education. All of these developments were voluntary. The formal establishment of garrison and regimental schools was suggested by the Duke of York to Lord Palmerston, Secretary at War, in August 1811 (3), and in December that year a General Order (4) was issued leading to the appointment of sergeant-schoolmasters to each battalion, to instruct young soldiers and the children of soldiers; the same Order provided for an allowance of £10 for books and other teaching requisites, and a

subsequent Order in July 1812 (5) authorised the provision of a special schoolroom in each barrack. The Bell monitorial system of education was introduced at the Royal Military Asylum with such great initial success that this system was adopted for the Army schools generally. This system was unproductive of school libraries, as was also the case in the civilian monitorial systems, and the educational deficiencies of the method was discovered by Army Inspectors at an unscheduled inspection of the Royal Military Asylum in 1846, when they found that although the boys were physically well cared for, their educational attainments were an indictment of the teaching system (7). After forty years of operation at Chelsea, the only books which were found there in 1846 consisted of a small collection of *Bibles, Catechisms,* spelling books, Mrs. Markham's *History of England,* and a volume entitled *Manners of the Jews* (8). A number of changes were introduced into army education. The schools were transferred from regimental control to that of inspectors of education, and a professional corps of schoolmasters was established with the rank and pay of sergeants. The Royal Military Asylum became the "Model school" and it was here that a Normal School was founded to train the army schoolmasters in a wide range of subjects including: English language, religious knowledge, English and ancient history, geography, mathematics, astronomy, mechanics, natural history, singing and drawing, and military fortifications (9). Schoolmistresses were introduced to Army girls' schools in 1840 (10), and in 1850 the Army established infant schools, and industrial schools in which girls learned knitting, needlework and household occupations (11). By about 1860 army schools formed a comprehensive network in which the teachers had both a clear status, and the incentive of bonuses for efficiency and good conduct (12).

Although the emphasis in army education seems to have swung away to the provision of elementary education for the children of soldiers, it still provided for the education of soldiers and non-commissioned officers. Indeed, it was intended to establish compulsory education for every soldier, and a General Order was issued in April 1849 which specified that every recruit should be required to attend school for two hours per day (13); this Order became the subject of a legal wrangle, and it was found to be unenforceable because it was not a part of military discipline. The best that could be done was to provide inducements for soldiers to attend; for example, no one could be promoted to Corporal until he was "tolerably advanced" in reading, writing and arithmetic.

Higher promotion required further educational attainments (15). At the time of the Newcastle Commission's *Report* in 1861 the army schools were clearly and tightly organised and were believed to be efficient (16), because of the Army's literacy statistics; 68% of the men discharged in 1856-7 were able to write their names, and in the same year 80% of a 10,000 sample of serving men could read and 73% could write (17). This seems to compare quite favourably with civilian literacy statistics of the same period. All fees were remitted to soldiers who attended the lowest classes in which they learned to read, write, do simple arithmetic, the elements of geography and English history, and writing from dictation. The more advanced classes attended by N.C.O.s seeking promotion and privates anxious to improve their education were provided at scales varying from 4d. to 8d. per month, depending on rank (18). There was therefore within the Army in the nineteenth-century a general climate of encouragement of literacy and education, from which it might be expected that libraries would emerge for the purposes of recreation and education. The Newcastle Commission's *Report* commented briefly, but, as will be shown, optimistically, that:

"In every regiment a good library is provided." (19)

but giving no details on the provenance, maintenance and use of these establishments. When and how did they begin?

The Order of December 1811 had established an allowance for school books, but despite the change from the monitorial system of education to a more book-based emphasis later in the century it seems that no special allowance was given for school libraries. The general availability of elementary education in the latter part of the century made the elementary classes superfluous for the soldiers, although the schools were continued for the children until the early twentieth-century, when a recommendation in 1904 for a library maintenance grant of 1d. per head per annum was not accepted on grounds of cost, only a few years before the schools were abolished (20). Apart from the limited supply of textbooks, the only official provision of reading material in the early nineteenth-century was the supply of religious literature which was available through the Chaplains (21). *Bibles, Books of common prayer,* and similar literature was provided in sets which could be requisitioned by the Chaplains as normal stores (22); but religious literature proved to be no more popular in the Army than in the other Services. Libraries, like the army schools, began to be established on the voluntary principle

and through local initiatives, particularly in hot climates where the soldiers were forced to rest during the hottest part of the day and required suitable light activities such as reading. The earliest army libraries, according to White (23), appear to have been those established by the Garrison at Gibraltar in 1793, the Rifle Corps in 1800, and the Royal Engineer Corps at Chatham in 1813 which also began to establish station libraries at home and abroad. These libraries were mainly for officers, and probably formed a services version of private subscription libraries or bookclubs which were widespread in civilian life at the time; but by 1816 the Royal Engineer Corps had reading rooms for N.C.O.s and were experimenting with small travelling libraries (24). (It seems likely that the pioneering by specialist gunnery and engineering branches of libraries might be connected with the greater degree of literacy which must have been required of men in those activities, which involved technical calculations).

The earliest official reference in Army literature to libraries appears to be in the 1836 *Report on military punishments* (25), in which the evidence of witnesses shows that libraries were then seen mainly as rewards for good conduct and as inducements to a better class of recruit to enlist. A Sergeant of Scots Fusilier Guards testified:

> "My commanding officer has formed a reading room, and given a library, for the use of men of good character, who are one year clear of all reports against them .... He always lets them attend and amuse themselves with useful books." (26)

Colonel Sir L. Greenwell, in charge of Chatham Garrison and Depot, gave evidence that there was a library for reference use at the Depot, and it was used particularly by the N.C.O.s; privates were not allowed to use it unless very well conducted (27). A senior officer who had served many years in the Mediterranean described how he had instituted a library of about six hundred volumes, which succeeded "beyond measure" because of the enforced inactivity of the men during the hottest part of the day (28). About one third of his regiment could read, and the men used the library under supervision, but N.C.O.s were allowed to use the books in their messroom. All of the works were light reading, non-political, and mainly military, such as biographies of the Dukes of Wellington and Marlborough, Nelson, and other commanders, plus voyages and travel, but no science. An army chaplain gave evidence that whan a library and reading room were provided, drunkeness fell dramatically (29). The Paymaster of the 52nd. Foot Regiment gave evidence about an "N.C.O.s

Library", but it emerged that officers and soldiers could also belong, and all of the members paid 2d. per week to the sergeant (30). Small military lending libraries had been provided in Bengal since 1821 and Madras since 1829, usually under the care of the Chaplain, with a clerk employed to keep a records of the issues (31). In the light of all this evidence about libraries, it is not surprising to find the Committee asking their most important witness, the Commander-in-Chief:

> "Have you ever considered regimental libraries for instruction not for military matters but general amusement?"

The General was not enthusiastic. Libraries would be

> "very well if confined entirely to reading and amusement, but there were always dangers of men collecting in societies of that sort." (32)

He apparently shared a common fear of many people in the governing class that the provision of reading material among the lower classes might lead to the spread of undesirable ideas engendered by the French Revolution, the Chartist movement, and similar schools of thought. Despite his obvious lack of enthusiasm, the Committee made a definite recommendation that there should be a library and reading room in every barrack (33).

Although the 1836 *Report on military punishment* did not contain any specific reference to military library provision in the Three Towns, this did not mean that none had existed or was in existence at that time. Certainly it is known that there had been a "Garrison Library" at Plymouth Citadel before 183o, for in that year it was transferred to the Devonport Civil and Military Library (34). No further details have been found; but the circumstantial evidence of the stock growth of the latter (which reached 4,000 volumes by 1840), plus the fact that the Garrison Library must have been a significant addition in 1830 because of the terms of the amalgamation and change of name, points to the possibility that the Garrison Library might have consisted of several hundred books and possibly even 1,000 volumes. If so, this would in turn hint either at an early foundation comparable with the other early army libraries already mentioned, or a later foundation and rapid stock build-up; but so far no indication has been found, and the solution of this problem depends upon considerable research being carried out by military historians because of the complex nature of the records involved. If the slender piece of local evidence is taken at face value, it was a library provided for the use of the local Garrison which covered the Three Towns, and

the decision to amalgamate with a proprietary library, plus the agreed terms of amalgamation, point clearly to the Garrison Library having been an officers' library. The actual terms of admission into the Devonport Civil and Military Library were:

> "... all military officers belonging to the Garrison; retired officers of the Army, not permanently residing in the Three Towns or neighbourhood; and the General in command of the district, as an honorary member" (35)

Military members enjoyed a lower rate of subscription than the proprietors and other civilian subscribers to the total library and newsroom facility, for the latter paid 3 gns. per annum, and the military members 2 gns. per annum or 3s. 6d. monthly (36). The timing of the transfer and the location of the Garrison Library is not easy to interpret. The seat of military government had been transferred from Plymouth to Devonport in the previous century, and there were large barracks in Devonport, so the obvious location for a recently established library would seem to have been at Devonport for ease of accessibility, rather than at Plymouth Citadel; the latter location is a point in favour of an early origin for the Library. Yet, why delay the transfer of the Library until 1830? The amalgamation of the collection into the civilian library could make sense, for the several barracks inside the Devonport Townwalls were not satisfactory and before many years elapsed were to be demolished after the building of more spacious new barracks. The Devonport Public Library was located conveniently in the centre of the town, providing easy access to those who wished to use it; perhaps it was indeed the recent establishment of that Library which made it feasible, for the first time, to transfer the Garrison Library.

The recommendation in the *Report on military punishment* that consideration should be given to the establishment of a library and reading room in every barrack eventually bore fruit in the form of a General Order in 1840 (37). This authorised the establishment of libraries and reading rooms at each of the principal barracks throughout the United Kingdom and the Colonies, to:

> " ... encourage the soldiery, to employ their leisure hours in a manner that shall combine amusement with the attainment of useful knowledge, and teach them the value of sober, regular and moral habits." (38)

Some prior preparation had been made, however, for in April 1839 the War Office had issued a list of books which it recommended to be purchased for the proposed Barrack Libraries (39). The first title

on the list was the curious choice of *Journal of the plague year!* However, quite a wide variety of works was included in addition to a generous helping of theological works; there were the fiction works of popular authors such as Fenimore Cooper, Fielding, Scott and Marryatt, the poetry of Southey, Milton, Burns, Byron and others, and military biography (40). The *Queen's Regulations and orders for the Army 1844* shed more light on these new barrack libraries (41). It appears that they consisted of a library and reading room at each of the principal barracks, and were established for the use of "the Non-commissioned Officers and Soldiers..." The initial stock was provided by the Government, and consisted of the works just mentioned; it was anticipated that the libraries would be enlarged by private donations, but no donations were to be accepted until they had been inspected and approved by the"Commander-in-Chief and the Secretary-at-War"(42). The Board of Ordnance was responsible for providing the accommodation, and fitting up the rooms with shelves and closed bookcases, as well as tables and benches, and heating and lighting arrangements in winter. The Library and its contents were placed under the charge of the Barrack-Master, who, together with another officer not under the rank of Captain, and the Quarter-Master of the Corps in Garrison, was required to make "a minute monthly inspection of the books" to determine loss and damage and to assess the charges; this was to be done every time there was a troop movement. The Ordnance Department was also responsible at first for the appointment of a librarian to each barrack library, and the librarian, under the Barrack-master, was responsible for the books; he was assisted by an N.C.O. from each Corps in Garrison "until he shall have become well acquainted with the persons and character of all the Subscribers." The amount of subscription paid by everyone who chose to use the Library was not specified, apart from being described as "a very small subscription." These *Regulations* remained virtually the same for several years, although the 1859 edition does clarify the situation further. For example, it is made very clear that the barrack libraries had been formed at public expense for the express benefit of the soldiers, and in extending this benefit to the officers, it had to be understood that in no case was that privilege to interfere with the free use of the books by the soldiers. Officers paid their subscription yearly, and were then free to use any library at the stations to which they might be removed during the year (43). The general supervision of military libraries had become one of the duties of the Inspector-General of Army Schools by 1859, and the librarians

were appointed by the Secretary of State for War. The librarian in the early years could be either an N.C.O. who was excused other duties, or a pensioner, who was paid a standard rate by the Barrack-Master with effect from 1 April 1844; the Order stipulating that pensioners could be appointed librarians also stated that the two methods of providing a librarian could continue until it might be seen which method was to be preferred (44). By 1859 library committees must have been in operation in some barracks, for:

> "It will be competent , however, to the commanding officer at every station to name also a Committee of officers, of whom the Barrack-Master shall be one, to consider, from time to time, the general state of the library and reading room, the books most read, the books most required, and to add to the monthly report such recommendations for the consideration of the Secretary of State for War as they may agree to, and the commanding officer may approve." (45)

From the beginning of the official provision of libraries it had been the duty of General Officers to report upon libraries and librarians in their periodical inspections of the troops.

It seems virtually certain that the Devonport Garrison Library which existed in 1861 and had a stock of over 3,400 volumes was one of the Barrack Libraries founded under the 1840 Order, although no reference has been found to it before then. Details come from two documents which were published within a short period of each other. The first is the Newcastle Commission's *Report on public education* which referred to there being a good library in every regiment. Some statistics of army libraries are provided in the *Report*, including Plymouth Citadel (46). There, the 17th. (2nd. Battalion) was 700 strong, and its men had borrowed a total of 117 books in six weeks. The Warwick Militia, 500 strong, borrowed 61 books in the same period. It is not clear whether these two regiments had separate libraries, but seems to be the implication. The Artillery at the Citadel had a library of 1,502 volumes, 62% of its men were subscribers, and they borrowed at an average of four volumes per subscriber in six weeks. The more encouraging return for the Artillery might be explained by the need for a higher standard of education among its ranks because of the technical calculations required in connection with their work; it might, too, be one of the long established Royal Artillery libraries which were permitted to continue when the next Army report on libraries was made in 1862, leading to changes in the library system which has been described up to that date. This was the *Eyre*

Report (47).

At the same time that the Newcastle Commission was making its investigation into public education, the Secretary of State for War appointed a Committee to "inquire into and report on the present state and on the improvement of libraries, reading rooms, and day rooms." The instructions were issued from the War Office on 17 February 1861, and the President of the Committee was Major General Eyre. The Committee was instructed to inquire into the greatest detail, including such matters as the number and size of the rooms, their ventilation, lighting, heating, furniture, cost, etc., and also

> "... into the number of volumes in each library; the number and names of newspapers and periodicals taken, and whence supplied; the general character of books and periodicals most in request. You will ascertain whether there are sufficient arrangements for changing books when fully perused, and for supplying new books from time to time, or for withdrawing or exchanging old ones ...; into the present pay and position of librarians, and whether librarians possess or wear the uniforms sanctioned by section 15 of Library Regulations." (48)

The Committee sent out questionnaires to commanding officers in order to collect information on these and other points, and received nearly one hundred and fifty returns; they also received letters from interested officers, and took statements from a number of witnesses. The published *Report* contains not only some interesting statistics on the local libraries of the Three Towns but also provides a general picture of Army library provision against which they can be set, which will be described first.

The Committee found that there were in existence three kinds of soldiers' libraries and reading rooms, viz.:

1. Garrison libraries, where books were issued to officers, non-commissioned officers, and soldiers in the Garrison, on payment of subscriptions.
2. Regimental libraries, belonging to regiments, and open to officers, non-commissioned officers and men, on payment of subscriptions.
3. Victoria libraries, established at certain stations by Her Majesty, from which books were issued to regiments without payment. (Note: these appear to be libraries on foreign stations particularly in hot climates, but it has not been possible to establish that definitely).

The former Barrack Libraries now seem to be termed "Garrison Libraries", and their picture is depressing. In almost every barrack a room was devoted to the garrison library in which books were under the control of a librarian, and could be borrowed or used for reference by the men. The libraries were for education and entertainment, but there were few inducements to read quietly or study because the room doubled as a library and a reading room, and sometimes also was used as the Librarian's quarters, contrary to the regulations. The rooms which were used for the purpose were generally small rooms of the standard garrison type, rarely more than about 600 cu. ft. (probably between 60 and 100 sq. ft.). Only in rare cases were two rooms used. The rooms were not light or cheerful and attractive to users. The lighting was inadequate in one quarter of the libraries, and the heating was also insufficient; the rooms were furnished with regulation forms, tables and chairs; the books were out of sight in presses or cupboards. The libraries therefore began with the handicap of being uncomfortable and unattractive, and this was compounded by the problem that the room was also used for games and recreation, so that there was much noise from those activities. The *Report* found that many of the troops could not read at all, many could read only imperfectly, and of those who could read, many had no taste for literary amusement and instruction. Perhaps it is surprising to find that the libraries were used at all because of this gloomy picture; but it was found that nearly 9% of the troops attended the library daily. The inference is that they came mainly to read the newspapers and periodicals which were provided, but books were being issued, with the most popular classes being fiction, biography, travel, adventure and discovery. Unfortunately, although there was an "ample supply" of books, there were only scarce supplies of works in these popular categories. Clearly these army libraries were suffering from some of the same kinds of problems which were experienced by the working men in civilian life - lack of money for new books, books provided which were not necessarily in response to popular taste, and control out of the hands of the main class using the library.

The Army establishments in the Three Towns appear to have had fairly typical library provision. Three returns are shown in Table 45; a fourth return from Plymouth appears to have been a duplicate entry from Plymouth Citadel, one having been returned by the Commanding Officer and one from the Barrack-Master, which are the same in essential details but vary slightly in their estimates of numbers of troops.

Table 45. Army libraries in the Three Towns, 1861.

(information extracted from the Eyre *Report* 1862)

	Devonport Garrison	Royal Marines	Plymouth Citadel
Number of officers	79	26	37
Number of N.C.O.s and men	1,858	925	1,067
Subscribers to library	110	N.C.O. 145 Barrack 591	800 yearly
Lighting	gas	oil	candles
Is it comfortable?	yes	yes	no
Is it considered successful?	yes	yes	no
Are tea, coffee etc. provided, with profits to the fund?	no	yes	no
How many rooms?	2	4	1
When is it available?	9 a.m. to tattoo	12-1.30 4 to tattoo	9 a.m. to tattoo
How managed?	Barrack-master and officers	Commander and Quartermaster	Barrack-master and officers
Does it have games?	yes	yes	yes
Newspapers and periodicals?	yes	yes	yes

The sizes of the libraries are not recorded, but it is evident that in general the Royal Marines enjoyed a much better standard than the other two local barracks, with their four rooms, two libraries, and high percentage of membership. (The Royal Marine libraries were excluded from later Army library reports, as they did not properly form part of the latter's establishment). Samuel May was the Librarian at Plymouth Citadel (49), but his name does not appear in local or Army sources of that date, so it seems likely that he was an N.C.O. who had been assigned the duty, for paid librarians seem to have been allowed only in the Garrison libraries.

The Eyre *Report* made three major recommendations, which were: to improve the Garrison Libraries, to improve Regimental or Corps Reading Rooms and Day or Recreational Rooms, and to make a limited and experimental provision of soldiers' institutes out of barracks (50). The first two recommendations were acted upon, and laid the foundations for a clear structure for garrison and regimental libraries which

lasted for the rest of the century. As these recommendations lay behind, and explain, the scanty local information available, they will be abstracted at this point.

The Garrison Libraries need sufficient supplies of books suited to the tastes and opportunities of the soldiers, which should be regulated as to the quantity by the number of subscriptions. The literature should be selected by a committee of subscribers, subject to the approval of the commanding officer. A good system of issuing books from the Garrison Library to the Regimental Reading Rooms generally and to individuals should be applied. An active and intelligent librarian should be employed at an appropriate salary, for much of the success of military libraries depended on his qualifications and ability to lead men to higher reading. Accommodation should be devoted separately in the larger garrisons to library, reading rooms, lecture or concert rooms, and librarian's quarters. The Garrison Library should be the centre of each garrison's system of regimental day reading rooms. Catalogues of books approved for garrison libraries should be printed cheaply and several copies should be sent to each regimental reading room. The Garrison Librarian should mark off in these catalogues the books held in his own library. There should be no separate subscription to the Garrison Library, - a single subscription of 2d. should admit a soldier to the garrison as well as regimental library, and half of that subscription should "as before" be paid from public funds. At the regimental level there should be soldiers clubs of two or more rooms for library, reading, recreation and refreshment. They should be self-governing as far as possible, and the committee should contain N.C.O.s and men in the proportion 1 : 2. The accommodation should be comfortable, and planned on the assumption of 20% of the men using it. There must be plenty of books, periodicals, newspapers and games. The Garrison Library should supply the books and periodicals, and change them from time to time. The Clubs should be open later than the public houses, to diminish the attractions of the latter, viz. 10 p.m. in winter and 10.30 p.m. in summer. An allowance of £2. 10s. per troop or company should be allowed to each regiment for books, newspapers, periodicals and games.

These enlightened recommendations were put into operation, and for the first few years it is possible to trace their progress through the *Reports of the Council of Military Education on Army Schools, Libraries*

and Recreation Rooms, from which the statistics in Table 46 have been extracted (51). Although only garrison libraries and regimental reading rooms were provided for in the system recommended by the Eyre Committee, they did recognise that some long established libraries had reached a standard which was not inferior to that being recommended, and therefore the libraries of the Foot Guards, the Royal Artillery, and the Royal Engineers, were permitted to remain (52). That explains why, at the local level, there is the Plymouth Royal Artillery Library which otherwise does not seem to fit into the general pattern.

Table 46. Army libraries in the Three Towns, 1863 - 1869.

(a) Devonport Garrison Library.

Year	No. companies	No. volumes	Issues last Quarter	Contributions last Quarter £. s. d.
1863-4	21	3,416	996	5. 5. 0.
1864-5	22	3,538	5,170	23. 5. 0.
1865-6	31	3,740	4,573	29. 10. 0.
1867-8	26	4,092	6,246	27. 8. 4.
1868-9	29	4,249	9,219	28. 15. 0.

(b) Plymouth Royal Artillery Library.

1863-4	7	1,301	1,690	9. 5. 0.
1864-5	7	1,360	5,053	14. 19. 9.
1865-6	6	1,227	4,832	11. 3. 3.
1867-8	7	1,324	4,656	17. 0. 4.
1868-9	5	1,250	5,841	21. 19. 3.

The statistics must be treated cautiously because they omit such vital information as the numbers of men and the numbers of subscribers, and the movement of troops also creates fluctuations which makes it difficult to strike an average. Nevertheless a few tentative conclusions can be drawn, from Table 46 and the general statistics provided in the *Reports* mentioned above. Devonport Garrison Library was one of the largest of its type; it was exceeded in bookstock by Aldershot (8,613 volumes), Dublin (7,351), Portsmouth (6,884), Malta (6,312) and

Gibraltar (5,709). The total number of companies in 1868-9 was 1,302, and the total garrison library bookstock was 169,669, or an average provision of 130 volumes per company; Devonport's average of 157 volumes was well above that figure; but the number of companies at Devonport that year was comparatively low, and the average number of volumes in 1865-6 when more companies were present was about 120 volumes.

Plymouth, with its stock of about 1,300 volumes, was about average size among the Royal Artillery libraries, where the largest was at Woolwich (5,676 volumes). The total number of Royal Artillery companies was 88 in 1868-9, with a total stock of 29,457 volumes, averaging 335 per company; Plymouth fared badly, with only an average 189 volumes per company, and no doubt this had contributed to the dissatisfaction shown with this library in Table 45.

It is difficult to determine how much the libraries were actually used, for the number of subscribers is not included in the returns; but if the average issues per company per annum are examined, it appears that the average issue per company for garrison libraries was 287, with only 240 at Devonport; the average Royal Artillery company issues per annum were 1,094, with Plymouth lagging at 665. The size of companies was virtually a standardised figure, so the averages suggest that the local libraries were lagging behind the others.

> The Council for Military Education commented in 1868-9 that
>
> "The libraries continue to give great satisfaction though the Council doubt much whether their utility is sufficiently developed." (53)

It felt that there should be more control in the hands of the regimental librarian rather than the garrison librarians, as the regimental librarians had a better and direct knowledge of the reading tastes of the men, and recommended that the local committees of the regimental clubs should press for that improvement (54). A few other refinements of the system were also introduced gradually, as can be seen from the 1883 edition of *The Queen's regulations for the Army*. In that year the garrison libraries were maintained by the compulsory quarterly payment by regiments at the fixed rate of 5s. per troop, battery or company in the garrison, plus a sum towards the pay of the garrison librarian. The library books in the regimental reading rooms were available free

of charge to subscribers to these clubs, and the books were also available to officers at a subscription of 1s. per month (55). Surplus funds from the regimental club were applied to the purchase of periodicals, newspapers, games, etc., which became regimental property. If there was more than one corps present at a station, the commanding officer was to establish a Garrison Library Committee, with such membership from the regimental committees as he might determine. This committee was required to meet at least once per quarter to select books from the recommendations of the regimental committees; it was also responsible for examining the quarterly reports and statements of the accounts prepared by the Garrison Librarian. Quite a lot therefore depended upon the judgment of the commanding officer, who was also required to approve the book recommendations of the Garrison Library Committee. He was instructed to take care that a reasonable proportion of instructive books were ordered as well as histories, travels and general literature. The Barrack-master's former responsibility for regularly inspecting the Garrison Library had been taken over by a special Library Board, consisting where possible of one captain, one subaltern, and the commissariat officer in charge of barracks; each quarter they had to verify the library accounts and the number of books, and to certify that:

> "1st. That the catalogues are legible and perfect in every respect.
>
> 2nd That the numbers on the backs of the books correspond with those in the catalogue.
>
> 3rd. That the names of all missing and condemned books have been erased.
>
> 4th. That those of all books received since last report have been added." (56)

Furthermore, an annual report upon each garrison library was to be returned to the Director-General of Military Education. Libraries had been reduced to a heavy administrative routine, and one looks in vain to discover any real sense of libraries as an active service for the troops, although the Eyre *Report* of 1862 had realised that it was necessary.

Local references dated 1883 (57) and 1901 (58) show that the libraries in the Three Towns followed the pattern which was dictated by these central orders and regulations. By 1901 the Garrison Library at the new Raglan Barracks had grown to about 9,000 volumes, from which the Garrison Librarian, (who must have been a pensioner in accordance with the regulations), supplied all the infantry regiments in the

Western District. It was supported by the standard arrangement of a government grant of 5s. per company per quarter, plus monthly subscriptions at the rate of 1s. for officers and 6d. for non-commissioned officers. In 1883, however, it was much more widely available:

> "This Library is maintained by the subscriptions of Officers now serving, or who have served in the Navy or Army, or of widows, sons, or daughters of Officers.
>
> Rate of subscription: 5/- quarterly or 2/- monthly payable in advance".

It was then open weekdays 11.30 - 12.30 and 3 - 6, closing at 5 p.m. on Saturdays.

The standard allocation from the Garrison Library to the troop units was 400 volumes for a Company of Infantry of about 800 men, and 150 volumes for a Battery of Artillery or Company of Engineers. The Raglan Barracks were occupied in 1901 by a "provisional" regiment, which had its regimental club provision of about 400 library books, and a reading room supplied with papers and games. Books were issued to the men on three days per week, and the loan period was six days. No fines were incurred on overdue books, but books lost or damaged were charged to the borrower's account by the colour-sergeant, which suggests that perhaps he was the regimental librarian; (regimental librarians were allowed 6d. per day out of the recreation room funds, and were non-commissioned officers seconded to the library duty). Issues were recorded in a ledger with a considerable degree of formality: "number of book, volumes, title, regimental number, rank of borrower, company, date of issue, condition, date of return, value of book, what state when returned". The books were kept in the subject classes of biography, military and naval history, travel, fiction, poetry, philosophy and religion. Any soldier could recommend a purchase through the regimental library committee.

The Royal Artillery Library which had been in the Citadel in 1869 had been transferred to Granby Barracks Devonport by 1883, and probably operated in a similar way to the Raglan Barracks' club library.

The general provision of military libraries was described in 1900 by Carter (59), who gave details of some of the minutiae of administration, such as those illustrated above, and came to the

conclusion:

> "The library system seems much too complicated to permit of the building up of a well balanced library. It is evident that the garrison librarian is a mere official, whose duties consist of issuing books in bulk to the regimental librarians, keeping accounts and preparing reports. ... everything will depend upon the officer commanding: if he is known to take an interest in the library ... there will be a desire on the part of the committee to fall in with his views, and consequently those views will be impressed on the library for good or ill. If, on the contrary, he does not take an active interest in the matter, it is very probable that the regimental committees will have a free hand, with the result that the library will be built up in a very haphazard manner." (60)

The last direct evidence of the pre-1914 Army libraries in the Three Towns was the 1900-1 description which has been quoted; but it must be assumed that two new developments which were established by Orders and Regulations were also present in this area. These were reference libraries and officers' mess libraries, which became necessary because of the considerable development of military science and technology in the latter part of the nineteenth-century and the recognition that adequate specialist education and training was necessary for officers. The reference libraries began in 1872, and were intended to provide officers with reference books and standard military works, under the control of the Instructor, to help them in their professional training (61). By 1912 they were generally available to assist officers not just in their training but also in their professional work (62). Official publications of a non-secret nature were supplied, and up to £10 worth of books could be obtained annually through H.M.S.O. to keep the library up to date. Each reference library was the responsibility of an officer of the general staff, who kept a catalogue and an issue book. Confidential publications had to be kept under lock and key, and were used only in the library.

Officers' mess libraries were small libraries consisting of "instructive and interesting" publications which were lodged in officers' messes to encourage the study of military literature (63). They were maintained by a government grant of £3 per annum, and were supervised by an officer of the general staff, who issued and collected them when units joined and left the barracks.

It will have been seen from this account of army libraries that there is likely to have been a substantial facility for officers and soldiers to read within their own barracks at least from the 1860s onwards when the main impetus was given to the establishment of army libraries, and that this facility improved as time went on. It is unfortunate that more precise details on the local provision have not yet been established, but it is to be hoped that some might be recovered as military history of the area is researched in the national archives by specialists in that subject.

10.2 LIBRARIES IN THE ROYAL NAVY.

The general chronological development of education and libraries in the Royal Navy is similar to that of the Army, but there were a number of differences in the quality and pattern of provision due to the basic nature of the Royal Navy itself.

By tradition, recruits to the lower decks consisted not only of adult volunteers and pressed men but also a large number of boys (64); the latter included genuine volunteers who had chosen a sea career, and an endless supply of waifs and strays who were sent into the Navy at the age of about fourteen or fifteen years by agencies such as the Marine Society founded in 1756. Until 1794 the boys lacked official naval rating, but in that year they were graded into: first class, who were the volunteers for a naval career; second class, those who were training to be seamen; and third class, servants. The extent to which they had received any education was varied, and at best limited, and as early as the late seventeenth-century a few captains thought that the boys could benefit by some instruction and appointed schoolmasters on their own ships. These low ranking and poorly paid schoolmasters were not usually the most competent in the teaching profession; and in many ships it was the Chaplain who provided such instruction as was required by the Captain. Midshipmen could also receive instruction from the Schoolmaster. By the early nineteenth-century the Admiralty had recognised the desirability of providing some elementary education for its recruits and added the official post of schoolmaster to the establishment of the larger ships. This early official provision of education was probably motivated by similar ideas to those which resulted in the widespread foundation of voluntary schools in civilian life in the early nineteenth-century; but by the middle of that century it had become evident that there was a more serious need to educate and train the men of the Royal Navy. This was because of technological developments such as the introduction of steamships, the construction of armour-plated vessels, more sophisticated navigation methods, etc. The quality of seamanship in general had to be improved to master the new situation, and specialisations emerged such as the Engineering Branch in 1836. Not only was it necessary for the officers and sailors to achieve at least a basic literacy, but the introduction of formal examinations into the promotion system made it necessary also for many men to improve their educational attainments.

Nor was the Admiralty concerned only with the seamen. It was also responsible for the Royal Dockyards, where, as already described in Chapter 8.5, schools were established for the shipwright and other apprentices. Highly specialised education and training for particular services also received attention, such as the Medical Department of the Navy, and the Engineering Branch. Again, it has already been seen how the Admiralty responded by the establishment of the Training School for Engineer Students at Keyham.

These developments in education and training brought in their wake the establishment of various types of library by the Admiralty. The earliest official libraries seem to have been the medical libraries established in the Royal Naval Hospitals at Plymouth and Portsmouth, as described in Chapter 9.4, in response to the desire to improve the medical education and training of the naval surgeons and other medical staff. The next naval libraries to be established were the Seamen's Libraries, or Ship's Libraries as they became known later; these originated in 1838, and probably sprang more from the fashionable concern for the moral welfare of the working classes and the improving effects of reading than from any primary considerations for improving the quality of seamanship. These libraries were often closely associated with the school libraries provided on board both seagoing ships and training ships at naval seaports. Within a few years, Dockyard libraries were also in operation in the Dockyard Schools, although most of them seem to have been given philosophical rather than financial aid from the Admiralty in their early years. A comparatively late local development was the establishment of the institution for training engineers and its Library, which eventually became the Royal Naval Engineering College Manadon. The Admiralty was responsible for the Royal Marines, and can be said to be responsible for the development of schools and libraries within that Service; but because the Royal Marines have a number of special features which distinguish them from the men of the Royal Navy, their libraries will be studied separately in the next section. However, the complete span of libraries of the Royal Navy afloat and ashore, includes all of the six types which have just been briefly reviewed, and this must not be forgotten, although the main type to be studied in this section is the one which is perhaps the most readily associated with the Royal Navy, the Ship's Libraries.

Finally, it must be remembered that in setting up its range of libraries the Admiralty also had to set up an administrative network to supply and maintain them. The Victualling Department became that agency, providing and keeping inventories and stores of books for H.M. ships around the globe and naval shore bases. The new Royal William Victualling Yard at Stonehouse, completed in 1835, was one of the three major establishments of the Victualling Department and was consequently an important channel through which books and libraries passed to and from the ships, even though the records of actual ships' libraries in the Three Towns themselves are comparatively few. It is because of this special role as a library agency, of considerable importance in the history of naval libraries although not itself a library, that some detail has been provided in the history of naval school libraries and ships' libraries on the administrative aspect of the service, so that the qualitative nature of the work at Stonehouse can be seen even if it cannot be actually quantified.

10.2.1 Naval school libraries

Boys could gain admission to the Navy in two ways. One was to enter immediately on board a ship in commission, and the second was to be received into one of the training ships in harbour and later drafted into a seagoing ship. Schools were therefore eventually established both on seagoing ships and on the training ships, but for a long time the quality of education was poor because of the generally low standard of teaching and the lack of enforcement into education. It was probably in 1811, the year that the Army established its schools, that the Navy took its first official step towards naval education by establishing the office of Schoolmaster on the regular peacetime complement of Guard-ships and seagoing ships of fifth rate or above (i.e. with crews of 245 or more) (65). For many years there were problems of pay and status, and it was not until 1836 that the Schoolmaster became a warrant officer; in 1840 a proper salary was established, and 1842 the post became simply Naval Instructor; in 1861 Naval Instructors finally achieved the status of fully commissioned officers. The Newcastle Commission's *Report on public education* in that year surveyed the education system of the Navy and pronounced it to be inferior to that of the Army (66). The Admiralty was accused of acknowledging the necessity of education but

showing little earnestness in carrying it out. Despite the provisions for the appointment of schoolmasters, education on the sea-going ships was very defective, and was largely dependent upon the interest shown by the Captain and Second Officer. Even where schools were held, they were irregular because of the prior claims of seamanship on the students. The training schools were affected by similar problems of poor and insufficient education, for the boys were often drafted before they had received any or much education. As the result of the recommendations of the Newcastle Commission the professional training and qualifications of the Naval Instructors was much improved, and the amount of instruction was laid down for the different classes of boys. Now that the problems of recruiting properly qualified staff and the enforcement of education were resolved, it might be expected that the standard of education would improve and that there would be a greater emphasis on the use of books and possibly libraries.

From the mid nineteenth-century lists of books for the naval schools were frequently produced and revised. They are referred to as "school books", and certainly many of the works were supplied in multiple copies and were evidently intended to be used as classroom textbooks. However, some titles in each list appear to have been reference copies for the use of boys and masters, and it is very likely that the collection of books was kept in the training ship schoolrooms and available for consultation during the specified periods on the timetable for study and recreation. These seem to have developed into the later reference sections of the training ship libraries, and their counterparts, the school books provided for sea-going ships, were issued to sixth-rate ships and sloops as an actual part of the Ship's Library. It is possible to trace this general development, which must have affected the books passing through the Victualling Yard at Stonehouse, and to see something of the practical results in the training ships at Devonport, which had undoubtedly had distinct school libraries long before the year 1901 when the first detailed description appeared.

The earliest regulations which have been found amongst the Admiralty *Orders* are dated 24 February 1857 (67), although this was not the earliest to be issued for it opens with the instruction that all previous Orders were cancelled and the following arrangement substituted. When a 1st., 2nd. or 3rd. rate ship is commissioned, the Chaplain is to demand the following books, which are to be kept in the charge of the

Chaplain and seamen's Schoolmaster for the instruction of the boys and such seamen as may attend:

		1, 2 & 3 Rates	4 & 5 Rates
"English grammar		12	8
Spelling Book superseded		12	8
Introduction to Geography		12	8
Compendium of Geography		6	4
Arithmetic		12	10
First Book of Lessons)		24	18
2nd. do. do.)		18	12
3rd. do. do.)	Irish	12	8
4th. do. do.)	Board	6	4
5th. do. do.)		6	4
Dictionary, English (Prof. Sullivan)		1	1
Wall's Scripture history		15	10
Bible and Gospel History		20	16
Catechisms, Church of England		60	40

One half the number in this list of books is to be added to the libraries of ships of the 6th. Rate and Sloops, for the instruction of the boys, by such person as the Captain of the ship may appoint." (68)

The reference to the number of books for the 6th. Rates and Sloops means one half of the number provided for the 4th. and 5th. Rates. These books had to last the duration of a ship's commission on a seagoing vessel. The training ships were allowed to receive the number of books assigned to 1st., 2nd. or 3rd. Rates, and a new consignment could be requested every three years. Fortunately some statistics about the numbers of boys being educated in the training ships at the Port of Plymouth are available for 1860, and it can be seen that the above books were quite insufficient in quantity and that the educational standard was then so poor that it is doubtful whether a library would have been much used if it had existed. There were three training ships at the Port. The *Impregnable* was the flagship and the main training ship. She contained 200 apprentices (i.e. apprentice seamen), organised in three classes. Class 3, the lowest standard, contained 87 students who had a very low educational attainment and could scarcely read. Class 2 also had 87 students, of whom less than one third were able to write a simple dictated sentence without making more than three mistakes. The top class, of 26 , could read fluently,

write a composition, and accomplish some arithmetic. The gunnery ship, *Cambridge*, had 158 students; and the *Royal Adelaide* had 194 students, of whom thirty had learned to read since they joined the ship. The numbers of fluent readers seems to have been small, but it is encouraging to find that it seems as though some reading ability was being inculcated, and the literacy rate in the Navy was evidently rising. The more serious determination of the Admiralty to provide better education is probably reflected in the revised list of schoolbooks which was produced in 1863 (69). The range of works and numbers of copies are shown in Table 47. It is interesting to find that the books for the training ships are now placed on a scale related to the number of boys, in the same way as the seagoing ships, for the rate of a ship was an indication of the size of her crew and therefore related also to the number of boys on board. In addition to the range of reading books, religious works, arithmetic, geography, history and grammar books, the schools were issued with sets of maps.

In 1871 the "generous" allocations of the 1863 booklist were reduced (70), and in 1880 there was a further, dramatic, reduction in the supply (71), in which the allowance of reading books fell from the former 20 - 60% to 7 - 15%; Chambers' *Standard arithmetical exercises* fell from a 50% provision to 2%. Many works were omitted entirely from the seagoing ships, and a standard number of copies of others was applied equally, regardless of the ship's rating. The reason for this is not hard to find. The improvement of national elementary education was resulting in better educated entrants to the Navy. As a consequence, schools were discontinued in the seagoing ships, education was concentrated in the training ships, and the more uniform educational attainments before entry made it possible to raise the standards of education there. The need was now for more extensive facilities to read for personal development and recreation, and to meet this the training ships carried an ordinary Seamen's Library (vid. inf.) and special collections of literature suitable for boys. This new situation is described in Hunt's account in 1901 of the training ships *Impregnable* and *Lion* which were moored in the Hamoaze off Devonport.

The *Impregnable* was the largest training ship in the Navy, and her Captain was also the official Inspecting Captain of all the other training ships, so it might be expected that the library provision on

Table 47 Books for Ships' Schools, 1863

	Training ships and stationary ships		Other ships, for the whole Commission		
	1st year	afterwards	1st., 2nd & 3rd. Rates	4th & 5th Rates	6th Rates & Sloops
	no. per 100 boys		no. copies	no. copies	no. copies
READING BOOKS					
Group 1.					
*First reading book Part 1 Part 2 Irish, First reading book	50 in all	After the first year, the maximum annual supply to be: 10% of books wholly bound, 15% do. half bound, 33% do. stitched, 100% do. in paper covers. But such numbers only to be demanded as may be actually required.	100	75	40
Group 2					
*Second reading book First sequel " " Second sequel " " Irish, Second book First sequel " " Second sequel " "	60 in all		100	75	40
Group 3					
*Third reading book Supplement " " Irish, Third book	40		80	60	30
Group 4					
*Fourth reading book Irish " " Supplement to " Fifth reading book	40		80	60	30
Jones's Advanced reading book	25		80	60	30
Do. for adults					
RELIGIOUS BOOKS					
Watts' Scripture history	25		60	40	20
Whittaker's Bible and Gospel history	50		100	75	40
Church Catechism	100		200	160	80
Do. broken into short questions	25		50	30	20
*Our Saviour's parables	40		80	60	30
Do. miracles	40		80	60	30
Nicholls' Help to reading the Scriptures	2		1	1	1

continued

Table 47 continued

ARITHMETIC				
Gleig's Manual of Arithmetic	50	100	75	40
Colenso's Textbook of do.	2 copies	2	1	1
Progressive examples				
Part 1	30	60	40	20
Part 2	30	60	40	20
Part 3	30	50	30	15
Or in lieu of the above.				
Hall's Arithmetic, Part 1	5	100	75	40
Do., with Answers	2	2	2	1
Do., Part 2	50	100	75	40
Do., with Answers	2	2	2	1
*Books of tables	100	200	160	80
HISTORY				
White's Landmarks of English history	20	40	30	15
White's Modern history	20	40	30	15
Gleig's Book of bicgraphy	12	30	20	10
GEOGRAPHY				
Hughes' First book of geography	20	60	40	20
Hughes' General geography	10	30	20	10
Hughes' Geography of British Empire	15	40	30	15
Or in lieu of Hughes' General geography,				
Cornwell's Geography	10	30	20	10
GRAMMAR				
McLeod's Definitions of grammar	24	30	20	10
McLeod's Explanatory grammar	in all	30	20	10
Or Morell's English grammar and analysis	24 in all			
Lowe's English parsing		30	20	10
Hopkins' Exercises in orthography	2	2	1	1
Anderson's Orthographical exercises	20	40	30	15
Chambers' English composition	20	40	30	15
Hall's Algebra for schools	2			
DICTIONARY				
Prof. Sullivan's	1	1	1	1

As stated on the previous page

* Books published by the S.P.C.K.

board would at least be of the minimum standard normally expected on such ships. The number of boys on board varied from 1,500 to 2,000.

> "The boys' library contains about 1,500 books, which are issued on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays. A schoolmaster conducts the library and keeps a manuscript catalogue of the books.
>
> The schoolroom in which the books are kept is thrown open for recreation on all evenings after tea until 7.30. During this time there is a good supply of periodicals, which includes all the principal illustrated papers, monthly periodicals, and daily newspapers .... Games may be played, including chess, draughts, dominoes, and bagatelle, but these are provided from a different source. This room is well lighted and made attractive and comfortable for the boys, who may write letters here .... A schoolmaster, other than the librarian, is in charge during this time.
>
> In addition to the above, a packet of provincial newspapers and periodicals, such as is sent to all first-class ships on foreign stations, is supplied by the Admiralty." (72)

The cost of the books, papers and periodicals for the exclusive use of the boys was met from a fund to which every boy contributed 2d. per month; the chaplain and headmaster managed the funds. The same financial arrangement seems to have been common to all training ships(73). The second local training ship was the much smaller vessel, *Lion*, which carried about 1,000 boys; yet, as will be seen from the following description, she had a much larger library than the *Impregnable*, and there is also the impression that the smaller ship's library was more popular among the boys. If so, it was probably because of the amount of interest and understanding shown by the respective captains and those who were involved in the management of the library funds.

> "The boys' library of the ship contains about 2,100 volumes, chiefly chosen as being adapted for boys' reading - not too lofty for them, but carefully selected. The favourite authors are: G.A. Henty (an easy first), Manville Fenn, Conan Doyle, Gordon Stables, Betram Mitford, Clarke Russell, Ballantyne, Kingston, Marryatt, Mayne Reid, Rider Haggard, Charles Read and Miss Braddon. Books are issued twice weekly, and the number ranges from 60 to 100. They may be kept for two weeks, and renewed if required longer. If negligently lost, boys are required to pay a percentage of the value of the book. Very few are, however, lost, and the most popular when worn are rebound. The boys take care of the books, and they last a considerable time. No one but boys are permitted to borrow from this library." (74)

It is interesting to find that the individual libraries on these training ships contained more volumes than the whole juvenile stock of the central public libraries, and the school libraries of some 200 volumes each at Plymouth appear pathetic in comparison.

10.2.2 Ships' Libraries

The official establishment of ships' libraries in 1838 does not seem to have been foreshadowed by the high degree of private enterprise libraries such as had been established in the Army long before the official Army libraries were founded. Perhaps this is due to the less advanced literacy and education in the Navy, and it also seems likely that the more heterogenous crews of the ships were less favourable environments for the emergence of sufficiently large groups with a common interest in founding a ship's library, whether for officers or men. Yet the tedium of long voyages probably encouraged the officers, at least, to take a few books with them, although there was little space in which to keep them.

The earliest proposal which the author has found for any kind of library on board ship is one made by Dr. Thomas Bray, of parochial library fame. His experience at seaports and on various voyages had clearly given him some insight into the problems and desirability of reading facilities at sea, and in his will he bequeathed £25

> "for the purpose of providing the chaplains to men of war with some of the choicest theological, philological, historical, and mathematical tracts." (75)

In a codicil to his will, written not long before he died, he added that he was in too weak a state of health to formulate a regular plan for these libraries, but he recommended the project to public notice. Nothing seems to have been done about it after his death. It is interesting that he singled out the ships of the Royal Navy and not the Mercantile Marine for his benefaction, and from the general context of Bray's library work it seems likely that he intended that the chaplains should not only have the use of the books but should also make them available to others who might wish to read them.

In 1816 an interesting proposal for the establishment of officers' libraries on board ships, on the private subscription library principle, was published in a letter to the *Naval chronicle* by two officers of *Leander* (76). Apparently the two authors of the idea were under the impression that their proposal was the first one of its kind, and they do not quote any examples of existing ships' libraries, so perhaps they were the first to express their idea in public.

> "Gentlemen,
>
> When we consider the many improvements which have been made in the navy since the commencement of the revolutionary war, we cannot help expressing our surprise and astonishment that so useful an establishment as a public library on board his Majesty's ships of war should have been hitherto neglected; more especially as ... such an establishment is not only practicable, but ... it may be accomplished with the greatest facility; and ... could only require a suggestion to be carried into effect." (77)

The writers go on to remind their readers that a library in which the best books in the different branches of science could be referred to as need arose would be of great practical value to them in avoiding the worst errors of judgment, and would help to add to their knowledge of natural phenomena which they witnessed.

> "But, alas! when we have not those opportunities of reading, to give us confidence in our own judgment in the separation of truth from error; and when we cannot make such immediate application to approved works on that branch of science which occupies our attention; months may pass away; our enthusiasm is gradually exhausted; .." (78)

The authors of the letter had obviously given much consideration to their subject, for they produced a set of regulations which they felt would be suitable for these officers' libraries on board ship; but nothing seems to have come of their idea, or at least no correspondence or reports of libraries have been found in subsequent volumes of the journal.

The origin of seamen's libraries seem to have been in the collections of religious literature which were being provided regularly to ships at the end of the eighteenth-century and early nineteenth-century by such societies as the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, the British Sailors' Society, and various tract societies. Sick and wounded seamen were particular targets of this literature. Governor Creyke of the Royal Naval Hospital Plymouth wrote in his journal on 2 July 1796:

> "Rec^{d} 20 Bibles and 10 small books 'Of the importance of a religious life' from the Bible Society which I have distributed into the Wards entrusting them to the care of the Nurses for the use of the patients." (79)

And again on 17 December 1797:

> "Delivered out 2 Bibles and 12 Common Prayer Books to be used in the Chapel and several Religious Books for the use of the Wards." (80)

Dr. Leonard Gillespie, Physician to the Fleet in the West Indies in 1800, noted in his diary for 2 August:

> "Sent on board the Leviathan 8 Bibles
> 8 Brays Books on Meditation for sick persons
> for the use of the Ships Company, with some other
> religious books to form a Library for the Sick Berth." (81)

In 1815 the Admiralty issued regulations for the distribution of books of religious worship under the supervision of the Chaplain-General of the Fleet (82); the books were issued in accordance with the formula of one *Bible* to every 32 men, and one *New Testament*, two *Books of Common Prayer* , and two *Psalters* to each mess of eight men. The Purser was responsible for issuing them and keeping a record, which meant a regular mustering of the books (83). In 1827 the control was taken further when the order was given that captains and commanding officers should only allow the distribution of tracts and religious books which had been first approved by the Chaplain-General (84). In 1828 the newly established Victualling Board came fully into the situation, for it was directed to supply additional religious books and tracts and thereby began to establish the administrative machinery which was soon to be used for actual libraries. It also seems as though the expansion of the religious literature permitted in 1828 virtually indicates the formation at that date of religious libraries:

> "His Royal Highness the Lord High Admiral has been pleased to direct the Victualling Board to supply to each of His Majesty's Ships and Vessels a selection of Religious Books and Tracts for the use of their respective Companies, (in addition to those already allowed); and His Royal Highness hereby directs that the said Books and Tracts shall be placed in charge of the Purser for the General use of the Ship's Company, to whom the Books are to be lent in such manner and at such times as the Captain may think proper to direct. A selection of these Books is to be lent to the Surgeon for the use of the sick bay, and to be under his care while so lent, but to be returned to the Purser when the Ship is paid off.
>
> His Royal Highness desires it to be understood that these Books and Tracts, when supplied, are to last the Ship during the whole time she may be in Commission, and that they are to be considered as Ship's Stores, to be taken proper care of, and returned into Store when the Ship is paid off." (85)

The way in which the Victualling Office dealt with this type of stock keeping is shown in Table 48, which also proves the importance of the Victualling Yard at Stonehouse in this traffic, soon to be expanded.

The precise events leading up to the establishment of Seamen's Libraries in 1838 are not known; but there were probably several factors which assisted. In particular, the Customs had established libraries

TABLE 48 Estimated requirements of Religious Books for Ships Libraries, 1841/42.

		STAMPED				UNSTAMPED			
In store 1.1.1842		Bibles	Testaments	Prayerbooks	Psalters	Bibles	Testaments	Prayerbooks	Psalters
	Deptford	184	179	607	721	116	130	132	100
	Portsmouth	80	220	698	721	135	339	228	100
	Plymouth	93	290	610	660	124	232	217	150
	Total	357	689	1,915	2,102	375	701	637	350
In stock 1.2.1841		652	1,365	3,370	3,010	394	754	697	350
Issued		295	676	1,455	908	19	53	60	-
Required for 2 yrs.		642	1,474	3,174	1,980	42	116	130	-
Proposed purchase		600	1,500	3,000	2,000	200	300	300	-
@		4s 11d	1s 9d	2s 2½d	10½d	4s 10½d	1s 8½d	2s 2d	
Estimated cost									£764. 3s. 2d.

for the Coastguards as the result of a report in 1836 (86), and that had in turn been attributed largely to the influence of Mrs. Fry who had succeeded in getting the Government to establish libraries for the use of patients in naval hospitals (possibly a more formal system than the one already in operation) (87). Probably the actual motive in establishing Seamen's Libraries was a mixture of moral reform, of improving the general knowledge of seamen, of education, or of simple humanity for men who were forced to spend many hours at sea without occupation when not on active duty. Many captains probably felt the same as one who, in requesting this new Library in 1843 gave as his reason that :

> "... there being many hours after work is over when the men have no occupation and when reading may tend to assist the discipline of the Ship, as well as the moral health of the people." (88)

The decision to establish Seamen's Libraries was taken in 1838 and promulgated in Admiralty *Memoranda* of 24 August (which was withdrawn) and 6 December 1838. This was a definite departure from the religious libraries which were already being supplied, although it was quite a while before some of the captains and commanding officers fully appreciated the fact, for they often made mistaken requests for "religious libraries," while meaning the new libraries. The text of the instruction was as follows:

> "My Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty are pleased to direct that Libraries shall be established on board Her Majesty's Ships and Vessels, and that certain books of which their Lordships have formed a selection, shall be issued for the use of the several Ships' Companies; the Captains and Commanding Officers ... are therefore hereby directed to cause a proper bookcase to be fitted up in some convenient place under the charge of the Seaman's Schoolmaster or such other fit person as he may think best.
>
> The books are to be lent to the Seamen under such regulations as the Captain may find it advisable to adopt for the purpose of rendering them as accessible and useful as possible, and for ensuring their properly taken care of." (89)

The Victualling Office immediately set about making the arrangements to obtain the books, and it appears that the complete individual libraries were sent to the victualling depots such as Plymouth for distribution, instead of each of them acquiring stocks of the individual works. The author has uncovered what appears to be a previously unknown file of material on the early libraries amongst the Victualling Office archives at the Public Record Office, which has yielded useful detail of the

first five years of the scheme (90). It also proves the direct participation of the Royal William Victualling Yard, although there is no means of quantifying it. The substance of the new information is summarised in the following paragraphs.

The libraries were provided in three standard sizes, viz.:
319 volumes for Line of Battle Ships
174 volumes for Frigates
112 volumes for other vessels.

This variation of size was achieved by varying the numbers of copies of a work, but each ship had at least one copy of each of the 74 titles on the standard list. The earliest printed list of standard titles seems to be dated January 1841, and the contents are shown in Table 49. About one third of the works were religious, one quarter on nautical subjects such as voyages and seamanship, and the remainder were on general subjects such as history, geography, English, arithmetic, and natural history. Three magazines were included, in sets of 5, 10 and 19 respectively - probably volumes rather than single issues which would soon be worn out, but this is not clear. The compilation of the basic list and the arrangements to distribute books via Deptford, Portsmouth and Plymouth took quite a while to organise. Estimates and tenders were being prepared and received in 1840, and it had not been determined under which vote the cost should be borne even by January 1841. During this time new titles had been added to the list, for example Dibdin's *Sea songs* were added as late as October 1840. The orders for the books were placed with various agents - some were direct to the authors, and others to booksellers in Portsmouth and London. The initial quantities ordered of each title varied, but there was a minimum of 34 copies for titles which were to be distributed in single copies, so the first plan was evidently for 34 libraries. As the success of the new libraries became evident and the demands were made by more ships, larger numbers of copies were ordered, for example 200 Dibdin's *Sea songs* and 500 of Belcher's *Nautical surveying*.

It was not long before requests began to be made for the new libraries, which were known at first as 'seamen' libraries and later as 'ships' libraries. Ships which were newly commissioned must have had libraries as part of their stores, but ships already in commission also began to request the books, for example *Winchester* at Halifax and *Vanguard* at Spithead both applied in August 1840. In December 1840 the

Table 49 The contents of the first Seamen's Libraries

	For Line of Battle Ships	For Frigates	For Other Vessels
	Vols.	Vols.	Vols.
Common Prayers, without Psalms, nonpareil	40	20	10
Great importance of Religious Life	12	6	3
Wilson's Knowledge and Practice of Christianity	6	3	2
Watson's Apology for the Bible	2	2	1
Life of Nelson	4	2	1
Directions for Public Worship	12	6	3
Jesus Christ a Pattern	12	6	3
Stonehouse's Admonition against Drunkenness, etc.,	12	6	3
Woodward's Caution to Profane Swearers	12	6	3
Elementary Questions on the Church Catechism	12	6	3
National Society's Book, No. 2	12	6	3
Trimmer's Abridgment of the Old and New Testament	4	2	2
Trimmer's Spelling Book, Part 1 - Good and Bad Boys	12	6	3
Christian Monitor	12	6	3
Old Chaplain's Farewell Letter to Seamen	12	6	3
National Society's Book, No. 1	12	6	3
Companion to the Bible	2	1	1
Bogue's Essays on the Testament	1	1	1
Doddridge's Rise and Progress	1	1	1
Baxter's Saints' Rest	1	1	1
Evidence of Prophecy	1	1	1
Sunday Reading	1	1	1
Book of Nature	1	1	1
Sacra Privata	1	1	1

Continued ...

Table 49 continued

	For Line of Battle Ships	For Frigates	For Other Vessels
	Vols.	Vols.	Vols.
Anecdotes of Holy Scripture	1	1	1
Sailor's and Soldier's Friend	1	1	1
Seaman's Manual, 1 and 2	1	1	1
Baxter's Call to the Unconverted	1	1	1
Pilgrim's Progress	1	1	1
Manners and Customs of the Jews	1	1	1
Anecdotes of Providence	1	1	1
Sea Sermons	4	2	1
Select Psalms and Hymns	1	1	1
Travels in the Arctic Regions	1	1	1
Arctic Voyages, 1818 to 1820	2	1	1
Do. Do. 1821 to 1825	2	1	1
Voyages to the Pacific Ocean	2	1	1
Watts' Scripture History	2	1	1
Joyce's Seamens' Hymns	2	1	1
Manners of the Israelites	1	1	1
Scripture Zoology	1	1	1
Nature Displayed	2	1	1
Instinct Displayed	1	1	1
Wonders of the World	2	1	1
Mechanics	4	2	1
Wonderful Escapés	2	1	1
Discovery of America	2	1	1
History of Useful Arts	4	2	1
Bligh's Voyages	2	1	1
Anson's Voyages	2	1	1
Byron's Narrative	1	1	1
Voyages to the North Pacific	2	1	1
Shipwreck of the Alceste	1	1	1
Results of Machinery	2	1	1
Pinnock's Modern Geography	2	1	1
Pinnock's History of England	1	1	1
Loss of the Kent	1	1	1
Working Man's Companion	2	1	1

Continued ...

Table 49 continued

	For Line of Battle Ships	For Frigates	For Other Vessels
	Vols.	Vols.	Vols.
British Nepos	1	1	1
Hort's School Dictionary	1	1	1
Lennie's English Grammar	2	1	1
Hutton's Arithmetic	2	1	1
Riddell's Navigation	2	1	1
Lardner on the Steam Engine	2	1	1
Nautical Magazine	1	1	1
Saturday Magazine	2	1	1
Penny Magazine	2	1	1
Thirty-six Years of a Sea-faring Life	8	4	2
Personal Narrative of Events, by Sea and Land, from the Year 1800 to 1815, by a Captain R.N.	8	4	2
Remarks on the manner of fitting Boats for Ships of War and Transports	8	4	2
Dibdin's Sea Songs	10	5	2
Captain Basil Hall's Loo Choo, and South America	8	4	2
Do. Fragments of Voyages and Travels, in complete Sets of 3 to 1 Vol.	3	2	1
Bethune's Narrative of the Battle of St. Vincent	4	2	1
Total	319	174	112

Victualling Officer of the Royal William Victualling Yard wrote to the central depot that he had no large sets of library books, and only three small sets in store; should he supply *Impregnable* and *Endymion* with the small sets if the large sets did not arrive in time? Two months later, *Lizard* in the Hamoaze requested a library from the Victualling Yard, but the only set available was one being kept for *Impregnable* ; seven months later *Lizard* communicated from Gibraltar that she had received a library but it was incomplete. *Belvidere* at Portsmouth also experienced difficulty in obtaining a library, for in December 1841 there were no libraries left in store at Portsmouth or Plymouth, and she therefore requested that one should be sent to Portsmouth from Deptford for her. The demand seems to have spread quickly beyond seagoing ships, for provision was made in 1842 for a library at Greenwich Hospital and Office of Ordnance at Woolwich; it came to be an established practice that these libraries were also given to shore establishments and it has already been seen that this occurred at the Keyham College. There seems to be no evidence in the official sources to show that these libraries were available only to subscribers; they seem instead to have been open free of charge to the appropriate community, unlike the Army libraries which had also been provided by the Government.

The Ship's Library was normally under the control of the schoolmaster, who apparently was able to make useful suggestions to the Victualling Office about extra titles which might be added to the basic list. In July 1842 the schoolmaster of *St. Vincent* at Portsmouth requested the National Society's *Church catechism,* Hogarth's *Geography,* Hogarth's *History of England* , and arithmetical tables. Some letters contained reports of the non-supply of certain titles, to which the reply was "out of print". The schoolmaster had to be meticulous in his checking of the books received against the standard list supplied by the Admiralty, for he had to pay for missing books. The same schoolmaster of *St. Vincent* had an early experience of this, for he was charged £4. 18s. 9d. for 28 volumes, and complained in November of the exorbitant charges which had been made:

> "Having had charge of the Ship's Library of this Ship, and unfortunately had some books taken away by the Supernumaries for which I have had to pay out of my own pocket, and finding that I am charged 10s. each for a book called *36 years of a seafaring life* which appears to me a most unreasonable charge,

> I shall feel very much obliged if you will favour me an Admiralty list of prices, and if you will enquire particularly as to the price of the book in question."

It was in accordance with the traditional naval practice that the complicated teething problems of the new service had been reduced by 1843 to a routine stocktaking exercise, with quarterly returns being made by storekeepers at the Victualling Yards on specially designed forms; this made it easy to keep check of the different titleswhich comprised the libraries as new works were added and old ones deleted. In 1851, for example, Gilley's *History of shipwrecks* was added to the list (91).

The popularity of the new libraries was soon attested by the well worn condition of books being returned into store when ships were paid off. As early as 1843 it was necessary to circulate an official remonstration about the defective condition of many of the books, and asking that all commanding officers should take effective steps for the better preservation of the libraries (92). Unfortunately there are no clues in the files to the borrowers; as the ability to read was not particularly widespread among the lower deck - or at least the ability to read fluently - it seems possible that the main users might have been the midshipman grade in the early years of the library service.

In 1862 there was a major revision of the list of books for ships' libraries (93), and this was probably another manifestation of the interest in improving the educational arrangements for seamen as a result of the Newcastle Commission's findings. In 1862 the policy of supplying ships with several copies of single titles was replaced by the policy of providing one copy each of a much larger number of works, giving a much wider choice of reading matter to the seamen. The libraries were still provided in three sizes,corresponding to the ships' complements of 600 and upwards, 300 - 599, and under 300 seamen. The respective allocation of libraries consisted of 338 titles (439 volumes), 192 titles (289 volumes), and 156 titles (247 volumes). Thus, although the number of volumes was an improvement of 50 - 100% in each group, the size of the crews they had to serve were also larger, as the size of warships increased. By 1862 the literacy of seamen must have been higher than in 1838 too, so the actual allocation was not really more generous. It worked out at about one title per two seamen, or less than one volume per seaman, with the averages favouring the smaller crews. On the other hand, the percentage of books which were likely to attract readers had increased

considerably. The number of religious works had fallen from about 25% to less than 10%, and the main subjects were now fiction, natural history, travel and voyages, history and biography, naval history and seamanship, general science, etc. Much of the literature consisted of the popular publications of firms such as Blackwood, Murray, Bohn, Routledge, etc.

The instruction which set out the details of the revised library contents also laid down new arrangements on the control of the library, which was now renamed "Ship's Library" instead of "Seamen's Library". The Captain no longer had a direct involvement; it was the Paymaster's duty to draw the Seamen's Library, to take charge of it, and to return it eventually to store. In order to improve the arrangements for the issue and return of books it was now the duty of the Chaplain to superintend the Library. The Schoolmaster was to act under his directions, issuing books as demanded and in accordance with regulations established by the Chaplain. The Schoolmaster was required to attend at a fixed hour each day except Saturday, in order to issue and receive the books. On ships which did not carry chaplains, the commanding officers should direct an officer to undertake the superintendence. The officer responsible for superintending the Library was no longer expected to make good any book which was lost, but an annual report had to be made of any books missing. Damaged books had to be reported by the Schoolmaster to the Paymaster in order that the culprit could be charged.

This more direct involvement of the Chaplain seems to have been a doubtful arrangement, although he was responsible for the religious books and had probably been required by the Captain to be responsible for the Seamen's Library on some ships; but the previous regulations had laid down that the Captain should put the Seamen's Library in the charge of the Schoolmaster, and so it appeared in the 1862 *Regulations* that the Schoolmaster's position had been undermined. Perhaps the new system did not work well for in 1872 there was a return to the former situation (94). The Captain was to see that the regulations with regard to Seamen's Libraries were carried out in such a manner as to facilitate the free circulation of books and promote their more general use, while at the same time ensuring proper care being taken of them. Therefore, the Captain was once again instructed to appoint the Schoolmaster, to manage the issue and return of books; but this was to be under the orders of the

Paymaster, who was to be guided by the printed directions contained in the new catalogues being issued with the augmented libraries. In ships without a schoolmaster, the Captain appointed a suitable person, who was allowed 1d. per day! The Captain had to determine the times and days on which the Library was to be open, and to enquire into cases of loss or damage reported to him. The Paymaster was thenceforth held responsible for the books being duly taken care of and accounted for; at the end of each quarter and on paying off he had to muster the books and report it on the Seamen's Clothing Account! The Chaplain's role was diminished to that of inquiring, from time to time, into the working of the Library and suggesting any alterations which might appear to him to promote the free circulation of books among the crew.

The revised regulations of 1872 continued for about ten years after which the Schoolmaster's role was discontinued, for schoolmasters ceased to be appointed to individual ships and were found only in training ships (95). The Captain therefore appointed an officer to take charge of the library, at a small remuneration, and the Chaplain had the general oversight.

By 1900 the Seamen's Libraries were classified in five instead of three groups, and officers' libraries had also been introduced:

	Officers' libraries	
1.	150 volumes	over 400 men
2.	100 volumes	200 - 400 men
3.	70 volumes	less than 200 men
	Seamen's libraries	
1.	982 volumes	over 600 men
2.	973 volumes	400 - 600 men
3.	753 volumes	250 - 400 men
4.	593 volumes	100 - 250 men
5.	443 volumes	less than 100 men

The officers' libraries consisted chiefly of history, travel, geography, biography, navigation, astronomy, physiography, dictionaries of foreign languages, and a few religious works. The seamen's libraries contained about 65% fiction, with the remainder of the stock covering the same subjects as the officers' libraries. Although the Admiralty was showing

commendable zeal in trying to provide the recreational and general educational needs of seamen through these libraries, it was failing to meet the new interest and needs in professional education, in such subjects as gunnery, torpedo work, and electrical engineering. Nor, apparently were they destined to develop in that direction, for the modern ships' libraries, which are in direct line of descent from them, still cater primarily for recreational need even though they now contain a reference section including technical and language dictionaries (96).

The role of the Port of Plymouth as a naval dockyard and victualling depot has always meant the presence of ships for commissioning, repairing, collecting supplies, or being paid off. It requires little imagination to envisage that for much of the time there must have been several ships in harbour carrying the Ships' Libraries, as a comparatively "hidden" and initially unquantifiable but definitely significant component of the libraries of the Three Towns. As for the Victualling Yard, it must surely have passed some thousands of libraries through the distribution and collection process by virtue of being one of the main Naval Supplies agents in the country. There might be comparatively little evidence about the Naval Libraries in the Three Towns, but perhaps they are paradoxically of much greater importance and influence than some of the more abundantly documented local civilian libraries.

10.3 ROYAL MARINE LIBRARIES.

The marines were first raised in 1664 as a band of "sea-soldiers" for special service on board warships, and from 1802 they were styled the Royal Marines . In 1755 the Admiralty raised fifty companies of marines and divided them into three Divisions, Chatham, Plymouth and Portsmouth; a fourth Division existed at Woolwich from 1805 to 1869. In 1855 these troops became the Royal Marine Light Infantry, with headquarters in each of the three Divisions. The headquarters of the Plymouth Division was the purpose built barracks at Stonehouse which had been opened in 1783 (97). The Royal Marine Artillery was a separate corps which, after a chequered history, was established at Deal in 1861. The Royal Marines came under the responsibility of the Admiralty, and until 1833 the senior officers of the marines were naval officers, but that was then discontinued in favour of career progression through the marines at all levels. Although the Royal Marines were under Admiralty management and administration generally, any detachment which was assigned to work with the Army came under Army orders in the field, and it was therefore necessary for there to be a close liaison between the Royal Marines and the War Office as well as the Admiralty. This was achieved through the office of Adjutant-General, an officer who was kept informed of Army orders and regulations etc. as well as the Navy's instructions. It became possible for the Royal Marines to virtually select their preferred choice from the two major Services, rather than necessarily accepting the Navy's version, although the Adjutant-General had to obtain the permission of the Admiralty before implementing that choice. Therefore, in respect of education and libraries, the Royal Marines benefitted from arrangements which sometimes copy the Army, at other times the Navy, and sometimes produced a version which was their own.

It has been seen in the previous two sections that there seems to have been a general connection between the history of education and libraries in the Army and Navy, with the former having many early regimental schools and libraries before the introduction of official systems, and the latter with a few ineffective schools and virtually no known history of early libraries before the official imposition of education and libraries. Where did the Royal Marines stand in relation to these two somewhat contrasting positions? Apparently, between them.

Schools were established at the Divisional Headquarters through the subscriptions of officers before the official schools were authorised. At Plymouth, a school was opened as early as 1784:

> " Plymouth, 6th. May 1784.
>
> School to be opened at Orderly Room tomorrow at 9 a.m. for benefit of such children of N.C.O.s and Men as may be of proper age to be instructed in reading and writing. Soldiers who desire to qualify for promotion can also attend, provided it does not interfere with duties. Sergeant Jewell is appointed Master; Hours, 9-12, 2-5 p.m. Children who want flogging to be reported to the Adjutant." (98)

Official Divisional Schools had been established before 1819, for an Order dated 2 December that year authorised grants of £10 per annum to each Divisional School for stationery etc. (99). Schools for girls were officially established in 1840, but had again been preceded by voluntary schools funded by officers' subscriptions (100). The schools seem to have been poorly taught and probably operated on the monitorial system, as in the other two Services. It was reported of the Plymouth schools in 1853 that the standard of the boy's school was not high, and "proper books for teaching scarce", while the girls' school was "no whit better than the worst specimens of Dames' Schools which are now happily disappearing" (101). In 1856 a conscious attempt was made to base the marines' education system on that of the Army, which was the most superior in the Services (102), and gradually Chelsea trained schoolmasters and mistresses were introduced and began to improve the standards of education. Although the emphasis appears to have been the education of children, the marines were also encouraged to join the classes; in 1858 adults formed 59% of the school at Woolwich, 47% at Portsmouth, 40% at Chatham, but only 34% at Plymouth. Many of the adults would have been preparing to take the prescribed examinations for non-commissioned officers . Schoolbooks seem to have been readily available by regular requisition from the stores, and were probably the same as the Army standard textbooks; certainly they were uniform with Army schools by 1872 (103). Although the officers were obviously literate from the beginning, the rapid rise in literacy among the ranks does not seem to have taken place until about 1850-1870. In 1866, only 49% of the marines, including non-commissioned officers, could read well and write well (104), and it was soon afterwards that the general elementary education system of the country began to impact on the Service and eliminate some of the need for the adult schools. It was probably because of the closer alliance with the Army education system than

the naval system that a similar establishment of libraries took place, more flexible and liberal than the naval pattern. It owed little to the education system, although the presence of schools must have encouraged some improvement in the adult literacy rate amongst the marines. The libraries appear to fall into two clear categories, the officers' libraries which, like those in the Army, were established long before the provision of regular libraries, and the officially provided marines' libraries.

10.3.1 Officers' libraries.

The detailed history of the officers' libraries in the different Divisions has yet to be uncovered, but that they existed is beyond any doubt, for in the correspondence from the Royal Marine Office to the Admiralty in 1840 was a letter which forwarded details from the War Office about libraries for soldiers, and in the covering comment the writer noted that the N.C.O.s of the Royal Marine Divisions

> "... sometime since, much to their credit, voluntarily, and at their own expense, established libraries for their use." (105)

He went on to say that the libraries were conducted under the sanction of the respective Commandants, and should not be interfered with, but the great benefit of libraries should be extended to the privates. In the various histories of the Royal Marines, occasional references occur to the existence of officers' libraries, perhaps in connection with such matters as building alterations or redecorations, rather than the use of the contents of these libraries. Blumberg and Field make mention of officers' libraries at Woolwich in 1848, Portsmouth 1859, Deal 1861, and others, but it is clear that these libraries must have been established much earlier. Fortunately more details are available about the Officers' Library in the Plymouth Divisional Headquarters at Stonehouse.

The earliest reference which has been found to a library at the Stonehouse Barracks seems to be in a guidebook published in about 1821, which states:

> " ... the barracks also comprise a library for the use of the officers, and a hospital." (105)

This information is repeated in other guidebooks in the 1820s, but in 1830 a little more detail is given:

> "... and ajoining the officers' mess room is a most extensive

Library containing every work of instruction, usefulness and recreation." (106)

A sketch plan of the Barracks in 1831 is shown in Figure 43, and the location of this officers' mess room is indicated (107).

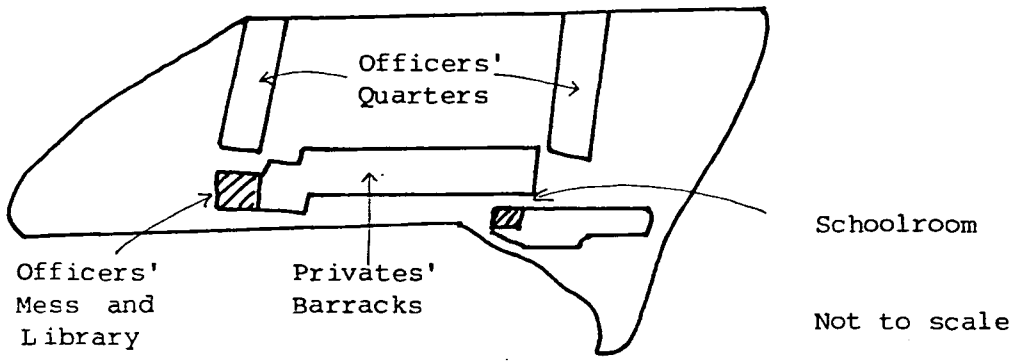


Fig. 43 Royal Marine Barracks at Stonehouse, 1831. Sketchplan

Here the Library remained, although few references occur to it over the next thirty years. In 1861 it must have been this library which was described in the Army Library survey as having 145 subscribers (vid. sup. p. 537). There is, however, a little confusion over the exact interpretation of the words 'officer' and 'N.C.O.' when applied to the marine libraries; the letter from the Adjutant-General, quoted above, referred to N.C.O.'s libraries, and the Plymouth reference in 1861 was to the N.C.O.'s library, but all of the local indications are that the Officers' Library should be interpreted in terms of "officer" means "commissioned officer". Certainly there are no signs of three libraries - officer, N.C.O. and Divisional Library - and the most likely interpretation is that the term "officers' library" might well indicate the senior ranks below the commissioned grades, which would seem to reconcile all of the other references.

The Officers' Library at Stonehouse Barracks was described in some detail in 1901 by Hunt (108). It was in the original location, a room of about 20ft. by 30 ft., shelved on all walls by 168 open

shelves which held the substantial collection of about 4,000 volumes. These were arranged in subject classes: History (general, classical, military, modern, naval and religious), Literature (classical, English and foreign), Archaeology, Architecture, Art, Fiction (English and foreign), Law (naval and military), Poetry (classical, English and foreign), Religious works, and Miscellaneous. All of the collection was available for loan except a small reference library of about two hundred works which included encyclopaedias and the *Dictionary of national biography*. The collection also overflowed into the lecture room above it, where there was a collection of serials including the *Annual register 1758 - 1851*. The Library was supported by the compulsory contribution by officers of "library dues" in the same way as mess dues and other dues. Each officer was required to subscribe four days' pay upon entrance, and 2s. 6d. per month thereafter. The Library was open access, and books could be borrowed for one month. The unspecified Librarian made a ledger record of the issues. The Library was managed by a committee of whom the President, Major Hailes, was evidently an active and interested member, for it was he who classified the books into the subject classes just mentioned and compiled a manuscript classified catalogue which was reputed to have occupied 95 pages of foolscap paper with double column entries which had the appearance of a typewritten work.

Hunt, who provided the substance of the above description, also described the Barrack Library and attributed the date of the latter's foundation to "about 1818"; this was definitely wrong, for the Barrack Libraries were founded officially in 1840, but it is conceivable that Hunt was incorporating a piece of traditional information which had become attributed to the wrong library; for an origin of about 1818 would seem about right for the Officers' Library. A part of the original Officers' Library has recently been replaced in its old location, and a visual inspection suggests that many of the surviving works had been acquired by about 1830. Some more of the original books are held at the Royal Marine Museum at Portsmouth, and it is hoped that one day it might be possible to reconstruct from a detailed examination of all of the surviving books some further information about the history of this Library.

10.3.2 Barrack libraries

The establishment of Seamen's Libraries by the Admiralty in 1838 did not automatically include the Royal Marine Divisions, although it can be presumed that when marines were detached for sea service they would have had free access to the books in the Seamen's Libraries. The Army established its Barrack Libraries in 1840, so within a short time the Adjutant-General of Marines had information on both developments. The War Office arrangements for Barrack Libraries were intended to cover N.C.O.s and soldiers, but, as already mentioned, the Adjutant-General pointed out that the N.C.O.s of the Royal Marines already had libraries which he felt should not be interfered with, and that it was the privates who would benefit from libraries. The recommendation which was made and approved was that collections of books similar to those furnished to ships of the line should be supplied to each barracks. They would be under the control of the Barrackmaster, who would be assisted by the Schoolmaster of the Division. Each private who wished to use the library could join by subscribing 1d. per month. The N.C.O.'s libraries should be encouraged by making a small donation of books to each of them (109). In this neat fashion the Royal Marines extracted that which was suitable for them from the Navy and Army library arrangements and added to them their own variant of token support for the Officers' Libraries from Government funds.

The actual Order was issued on 12 May 1841, to establish Barrack Libraries for the use of the drummers and privates of the several Divisions of Royal Marines (110). The first two libraries to be established were Portsmouth and Chatham Divisions in 1841, and Plymouth and Woolwich in 1842 (111). Provision had been made in the annual estimates, and in December 1841 the Admiralty authorised the expenditure of £70 each for the libraries of Plymouth and Woolwich (112). In May 1842 the Commandant at Plymouth received a printed catalogue of books, and the instruction that books to the value of £50 were to be selected for the "Privates' Library" and £20 for the "Serjeants' Library" (113). The books were scheduled to be forwarded from Messrs. Whittaker at the end of July, and were presumably bound in a standard style as had been done for Chatham (114). There was thus a freedom of selection of books, which was denied to the seamen who had to accept identical libraries. Rules and regulations were drafted and

circulated to the Divisions, where it seems the arrangements for the management and administration of the libraries must have been standardised accordingly. These *Rules and regulations* were stated in correspondence dated August 1841 to be "in accordance with those established by the War Office for a like purpose" (115), but a copy of the latter document has not been found for purposes of comparison. The Royal Marine version contained fifteen rules, of which the following is an abstract.

The Divisional Commandant is to superintend the concerns and management of the Library, and a steady and intelligent N.C.O. is to be appointed to act as Librarian. Every private or drummer can become a subscriber, at 1d. per month. The subscriptions are deducted in advance by the Pay Captain and handed to the person designated by the Commandant to receive them. Subscribers can have free access, unless they are under punishment, when they are barred. The names of subscribers are to be kept in a book in the Orderly Room. A catalogue, the books, and a copy of the *Rules and regulations*, are to be open to the inspection of subscribers. The Library will be open every day at hours to be appointed by the Commandant, and the Librarian is to attend to issue and receive books, keeping a register of loans which must record the date, company, name of subscriber, date due, and remarks; but books could only be borrowed by "men of exemplary character", and the subscriber had to borrow in person, unless he was sick, in which case the Hospital Sergeant became responsible for the books. The Librarian is to issue books impartially, in order of application. A copy of the full rules must be inside the left board of each book, stating the value of the book and the number of days allowed for reading it. On the outside of each book there should be lettered the name of the Division with the letters R.M. underneath.

A query soon arose from one of the Divisions. Was the N.C.O. who acted as Librarian to be paid? In the Army Barrack Libraries there was a payment of 6d. per day for large libraries and 4d. per day for small libraries. The reply was that in the Army the money from the subscriptions and fines were credited to the Public Funds, whereas in the Royal Marine Libraries this money was applied for the sole use and benefit of the men, in the purchase and repair of books and other necessary expenses. Therefore, in fairness, the Librarian ought to be paid out of that fund, and a statement was being requested about the funds. In the meantime, the Librarian should be content with being

excused from other duties (116).

The new libraries were probably called Barrack Libraries at first because that term was used in the Army; but in the Royal Marines it happened that the four libraries were located in the headquarter barracks of each Division, and gradually the name Divisional Library came into use instead of Barrack Library. At first the libraries were watched carefully, but a favourable report in June 1845 resulted in an extra total appropriation of £140 in 1845-6 in order to inject new books to the value of £25 in each Barrack Library and £10 each to the "N.C.O."'s (Officers) Libraries , (117), and the book orders were once again supplied by Whittaker & Co. (118).

The first location of the Divisional Library in the Stonehouse Barracks is not known, but in 1862 a new colonnade gateway was constructed at the main entrance and the Divisional Library was moved into one of the upstairs rooms within the new construction (119). It seems as though the Divisional Libraries were something of a hybrid between the Army's Garrison Libraries and Regimental Clubs, for they were part of a recreational complex, as described in 1884 by Captain Long R.N. (120). The men paid small monthly subscriptions to the recreation fund, which covered the library and a recreation room; at Portsmouth the subscription was 1d., but at Chatham and Plymouth only ½d. The income also included a small profit on the sale of old books, a part of the fines for drunkeness, and an Admiralty grant of £30 per annum. These institutions were managed by a committee of the men themselves, under official supervision, and a sergeant was in charge as 'secretary of the library', receiving an allowance of 1s. at Portsmouth and 6d. at Chatham and Plymouth (presumably per diem). The libraries were for reference and lending, and books could be borrowed not only by the men who were living in the barracks, but also those living in married quarters or out of barracks. Long included some interesting statistics in his paper, from which Table 50 is extracted. It shows that the percentage of subscribers at Plymouth was only 22%, the lowest of all the Divisions, but on the other hand the attendance by actual subscribers was comparatively high, 50%, the second highest. The number of volumes in the library at Plymouth was the highest per subscriber, and the average number of issues per annum per subscriber, (assuming that the membership

TABLE 50 Royal Marine libraries and recreation rooms 1875.

For the half-year ending 31st December 1875

	Depot	Eastney	Chatham	Forton	Plymouth
Total no. of subscribers on 31 Dec.	918	613	761	262	180
No. of men on shore at that date who might be subscribers	1,120	1,570	1,319	878	819
Percentage in membership	81.9	39.0	57.7	30.0	22.0
Av. daily attendance in library and recreation room	300	600	260	125	90
% of subscribers attending	32.7	97.8	34.2	47.7	50.0
No. of vols. in library	2,637	3,941	2,966	1,893	1,642
No. vols. issued in halfyear	7,303	9,100	3,945	2,984	2,576
Av. no. books on loan	297	369	188	250	130
For whole year 1875					
No. of issues	13,779	20,800	6,997	6,844	5,340

as at 31 December can be taken to represent the average over the year), shows that the marines who did use the library at Plymouth did in fact make a comparatively intensive use of it.

In 1888 the Divisional Library at Stonehouse Barracks was extensively renovated, and an account of the improved rooms was given in the local press.(121) The bookstock consisted of between 2,000 and 3,000 volumes of the "best class" of literature and numerous works of reference, held in bookcases along one side of the room. Around the other sides were settees, chess and writing tables, and in the centre of the room were two large tables containing various papers, surrounded by easy chairs. The room was decorated with maps around the walls, two pictures of marines in historic costume, and engravings of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. The floor had been covered with linoleum, and the lights had been redistributed to ensure an equal amount of light throughout the room. It was

> "... altogether one of the most comfortable and well supplied institutions of its kind in Her Majesty's Services"

There appears to have been little change at Stonehouse between 1888 and the next account which is dated 1901 (122). The subscription had increased to 1d. per month, the subscribers numbered about 1,150, and the bookstock was reckoned as about 2,000 volumes. The books were contained in glass-fronted cases, and were arranged "apparently according to size and not classified". The books were on open access, and the reading room was open from 9 a.m. to 10 p.m. daily; books were issued from 5 - 6 p.m. daily except Fridays and Sundays. The Librarian was a sergeant, who reported the undue retention of books and other offences to the Committee, which consisted of representatives of the men with the Sergeant-Major as the President. Any member could recommend books to the Committee. The majority of users read for recreation, but in addition to light literature the Library contained many volumes of biography, naval and military history, and travel, besides several reference works such as dictionaries and encyclopaedias.

No further references have been found to this Library before 1914, but it gives the general impression that perhaps the strong unity of the smaller Divisions of the Royal Marines could respond more easily to popular tastes in literature than the larger network of Army and Navy libraries of the same date, and with less formality.

CHAPTER ELEVEN. MISCELLANEOUS LIBRARIES

During the course of this investigation into the history of libraries in the Three Towns a considerable number of references have been found to libraries which either did not fit into the general groups contained in Chapters 3 to 10, or which were too fragmentary to come to any particular conclusion over their type, size, users and general significance. Nevertheless it is important that the record should be as complete as possible, and so this chapter contains a variety of material ranging from a brief history to a simple mention of individual libraries which were to be found in the area. They have been grouped, tentatively, under the general headings: Church and chapel libraries, Quasi-professional libraries, Recreation libraries, Society and Association libraries, and Other libraries and newsrooms.

11.1 Church and chapel libraries

The growing desire of the working class for education in the nineteenth-century and the accompanying need to read was met in a variety of ways, including the convenient one of providing libraries for the use of particular congregations. Often an element of philanthropy was involved in their establishment and maintenance, but sometimes a small charge was levied to help to maintain and enlarge the collection.

The earliest reference to a local library of this kind seems to be a single reference to the UNITARIAN CHURCH in Norley St., Plymouth:

> "In connection with this chapel is a 'fellowship fund', commenced in 1817, for assisting in building places of worship, etc.; a 'Chapel Library', founded in 1825; a 'Tract Society'; a large Sunday School, to which are attached a Library and a Savings Bank; and a 'Visiting and Working Society'". (1)

It appears quite clearly that this was a separate library from the Sunday School Library which was described in Chapter 8.

Another library seems to have belonged to the UNITARIAN CHURCH at Devonport. It appears to have had a long history, to judge from the fact that there were some 1,400 volumes in 1885 when the following account was written:

> "The Christ Church (Unitarian) Congregational Library at Devonport consists of about 1,400 volumes, chiefly sermons and theological works by Clergy of the Church of England and Unitarian and other Nonconformist Divines of the last century. It contains however, some theological works of a more recent date, and a few volumes of history, biography and general literature, and some unbound magazines. Unfortunately several sets of books are incomplete, among which is a fine copy of Dr. Priestley's Works in 25 vols. 4to., four of which are missing. The library is kept in a room over the vestry, and is open free of charge to members of the congregation, and to any person introduced or recommended by a member. There is a MS. catalogue compiled two years ago (1883). There is no fund for additions or for the maintenance of the library". (2)

It seems probable, from the contents, that this Library could have been established in the context of providing means of education for nonconformists who were not permitted to attend university. The first Unitarian Chapel in Devonport was established in 1791 (3). The theological emphasis seems to point to a late eighteenth or early nineteenth-century, and possibly its foundation by a large nucleus of a bequest or donation as early as 1791, but nothing more has been found. The Chapel moved to a new building in 1860, and it was there that the Library was located in 1885.

The Parish of Stoke Damerel had a PAROCHIAL GRATUITOUS LENDING LIBRARY. Hunt refers to it in 1901 as "One of the earliest regularly established libraries of which I am able to find a printed record", and quotes the date as about 1820 (4). However, he seems to have taken his information almost verbatim from Brindley's *Directory* of 1830, and the 1820 date is more likely to have been a misprint than a reference to a directory of which no trace now exists even in the nineteenth-century local bibliographies and catalogues. Brindley wrote:

> "This praiseworthy Institution owes its origin to the efforts of the rector, the Rev. W.J. St. Aubyn, and was received by the inhabitants at the first public meeting, with the most cordial and liberal spirit. Nearly 300 volumes of excellent works are already in course of circulation among the families of labourers and working mechanics, and it will, no doubt, be the means of inducing a desire to enjoy their domestic hearth, instead of seeking pleasure in vulgar and demoralising pursuits. The books are at present issued from the house of Mr. Mortimer, corner of Ker St. and Duke St.".

"President Rev. W.J. St. Aubyn
Treasurer Mr. John Symons
Secretary Rev. John Briggs
Librarian, pro. tem. Rev. W.J. St. Aubyn". (5)

The St. Aubyn family, the former Lords of the Manor, continued to patronise the new town of Dock and the Rev. W.J. St. Aubyn was one of its members, so it seems likely that the 300 volumes mentioned could have been a donation from that source. The contents and usage of this small library form an interesting contrast to the heavily theological Congregational Library.

ST. BUDEAUX PAROCHIAL LIBRARY seems to have originated some time before 1826, for a note appears in a manuscript which antedates notes by an incumbent known to have been there from 1826 to 1832. The note merely said:

> "The books belonging to the parochial lending library are kept in a box at the Vicarage". (6)

A later note by the Rev. B. Vallack provides some interesting detail.

> "The Parochial Library was enlarged in October 1836 by means of a Collection made in the Church amounting to Two Pounds; and a grant to the like amount from the Religious Tract Society. The plan adopted is for the Poor to pay two pence a quarter, and others a shilling a year for the use of their household - the poor being allowed the use of one book at a time, and shilling subscribers two. A fine of a penny a week to anyone detaining a book without permission, beyond the time specified on the cover. In 1837 the number of Volumes amounted to about 180". (7)

The enlargement of the Library in 1836 appears to have been related to the erection of a new school room at the Church in 1836, and the implication seems to be that at that time the books were transferred from the box in the Vicarage to perhaps a bookcase in the schoolroom.

11.2 Quasi-professional libraries

It is not always possible to distinguish private professional libraries from collections of professional literature used communally or to distinguish whether libraries associated with a particular occupational group did actually contain professional literature or works of a general character; hence, the title for this group being quasi-professional libraries rather than being claimed entirely as professional support libraries.

11.2.1 Libraries for the clergy

There were evidently two theological libraries used by the clergy. One was connected with the Roman Catholic Church, and was probably established at the time the Roman Catholic Cathedral was built in 1858. A guidebook published at an uncertain date in the 1880s states that:

> "There is also a good Theological Library at the Bishop's House (Roman Catholic), Plymouth". (8)

In 1901 a further reference mentions:

> " ...; a Theological Library, consisting chiefly of early editions of the Greek and Latin Fathers, at the Roman Catholic Cathedral in Cecil St.; this is, of course, a private library, the use of the books being confined to the resident clergy". (9)

The Anglican clergy of the Three Towns decided, with the advice and aid of their Diocesan, to establish a Clerical Library, and a grant of 134 books was made by the Bray Associates in 1840 to aid that foundation (10). This seems to have been a completely new library but it does not seem to have had a very successful history. In 1886-7 an enquirer wrote to a local magazine in connection with old parochial libraries that:

> " ... I have just heard that St. Andrew's Chapel, Plymouth, possesses such a library, which I dare say your subscriber and correspondent, the Rev. J.E. Risk, M.A., would have no objection to describe for the benefits of your readers. At any rate, I shall be obliged if you can say that I am correctly informed on the above point". (11)

No description or even any reply was forthcoming, and it seems likely that the Library had already ceased to exist. The Library continued to be listed in the *Annual Reports* of the Bray Associates until 1895; in the 1896 Report it appears in the list of libraries no longer existing, for it appeared as one of the "Libraries founded more than 25 years ago and never subsequently augmented, and from which no returns have been received, are removed from the list of existing libraries" (12).

11.2.2 A library for architects?

In 1851 the Education Census included returns on literary and scientific institutions, and under the heading "Plymouth" was listed "Exeter Diocesan Architectural Society (Plymouth Branch)" (13). It showed sixty members, subscribing at 10s. 6d. per annum, half the

rate of the Exeter members. It had no library, but does show the presence of an early professional organisation which seems to have been the forerunner of the Plymouth Branch of the Devon and Cornwall Society of Architects. The latter definitely had a library, which in recent years was housed in the College of Art Library, and had reached an accession number of at least 1189, as is evidenced by an accession number on one of the few surviving volumes which is now incorporated into the stock of Plymouth Polytechnic Learning Resources Centre (14). The earliest publicationdate of volumes surviving with the ownership evidence of the Devon and Cornwall Society of Architects Plymouth Branch Library is 1862; but this does not necessarily mean that the Library had a mid nineteenth-century start, for an 1867 publication was the property of Henry Luff in 1882 and only later added to the Library. The other evidence from surviving volumes relates entirely to the post-1914 period. The history of specialist library provision for architects is complicated and does not definitely go back into the pre-1914 period, although, as has been shown, it might possibly have done so.

11.2.3 Plymouth Police Library

The Plymouth Police Library was probably a collection of reference books on aspects of law and order, although the records are not specific on this point and a more general library could also be argued.

The first modern police force, the Metropolitan Police, was established in 1829 and soon proved superior in organisation and efficiency to the old system of parish constables and paid watchmen. Similar forces were organised in many boroughs following the *Municipal Corporations Act* 1835, including Plymouth and Devonport which established Watch Committees in 1836 and 1838 respectively. East Stonehouse was a division of the Devon Constabulary, county police forces having become mandatory in 1856. In 1857 Devon County proposed the amalgamation of the Plymouth Borough Police, but the idea was firmly rejected by Plymouth. In order to maintain a borough police force certain standards had to be met, and the force was inspected annually by inspectors of constabulary who reported to the Home Secretary, upon which he granted or withheld his certificate of efficiency. The Plymouth Police Force was certified

in 1857 as being maintained in a state of efficiency in numbers and discipline (15), and there seems to have been no external pressure for the reorganisation which was recommended in December 1862 (16). Instead, it seems to have been a rationalisation after a review which took place shortly after the retirement of Superintendent Codd at the end of July 1862 and his replacement by John Freeman, formerly Superintendent of 'H' Division (Stonehouse) of Devon Constabulary. The reorganised force consisted of 15 officers, 53 constables, and 1 "detective policeman".

The first reference to Plymouth Police Library in March 1863 strongly suggests that the establishment of the Library took place at this time:

> "PLYMOUTH POLICE LIBRARY. Mr. Carkeet, of St. Andrew St., has recently presented 20 volumes on very interesting subjects, to the Library which has been established for the use of the members of the Plymouth Police Force. General Campbell has also made a present to the library of 7 volumes". (17)

Mr. Carkeet was the Manager of the Fire Brigade before its formal establishment when the Borough adopted the Local Government Acts for that purpose, and he worked closely with the Watch Committee. It is not clear whether he was the main founder of the Police Library, or whether the Library was perhaps part of the reorganisation upon the appointment of Superintendent Freeman. No reference occurs in the Watch Committee minutes; nor do the annual estimates show any provision for maintaining a library, although the estimate for "Incidentals" in 1864 showed an unexplained higher figure than usual, and any library expenditure would have to be made under that section of the estimates, for the other two sections on pay and clothing were presented in complete detail. The "Incidental" accounts for 1863 to 1866 were £26, 80, 37 and 47 respectively, so the allocation of £80 was definitely significant, being double the usual expenditure.

The next reference to the Police Library appears to be nearly thirty years later, when the Plymouth Free Public Library Committee sanctioned the loan of 100 volumes to the Borough Police Force (18). This loan collection was augmented and exchanged the following year (19), further augmented in 1895/6 (20), and had the status of a special branch

library in 1897/8 (21), by which time it held 150 volumes of public library stock.

The Watch Committee minutes at the end of the century contain detailed lists of the accounts authorised for payment by the Committee, but they reveal little expenditure on books and none on periodicals, unless disguised under entries of "petty disbursements" of a few pounds, which seems unlikely. Only seven entries were found for the purchasing of publications from July 1896 to the end of 1905, and these items were probably for use as "bench books" rather than permanent library additions.

			£.	s.	d.
1896	11 Nov.	Shaw & Sons. Stone's *Justices Manual*	1	- 5	- 8
1898	23 Feb.	Kelly's Directories Ltd.		10	- 6
1899	23 Feb.	Kelly's Directories Ltd., *Directory*		10	- 6
1902	22 Jan.	Kelly's Directory, *Directory*	1	- 10	- 0
1903	18 Feb.	T. Sowler & Sons, *Police almanacs*		3	- 2
	24 April	John Smith. Maps etc.		13	- 0
1905	22 Feb.	Kelly's Directories Ltd., copy of County Council's etc. & parish council's companion for 1905		10	- 6

The pattern continued until 1914, when the amalgamation of the three local government authorities brought about an amalgamation of the Police Forces.

11.3 Recreation libraries

Although many libraries were established to provide recreational as well as educational literature, one library has been singled out for separate attention for it was doubly recreational, being the recreational library of an organisation which was itself wholly involved in recreation. This was the ROYAL WESTERN YACHT CLUB LIBRARY.

In 1827 the Club was founded under the patronage of H.R.H. the Duke of Clarence, and it is one of the oldest and most renowned yacht clubs in the United Kingdom. Membership was theoretically unlimited, but after the first one hundred members had joined admission was limited and by ballot only (22). The Club was governed by the Patron, Vice-President, Stewards and the Committee of fifteen members. Members of the

Club in 1830 wore "peculiar dress and undress uniform" (23) and "when keeping yachts take out a regular commission which, among other privileges, entitles them to enter foreign ports free of charge" (24). For the first few years the Club met in rented accommodation which was apparently shared with other users, but in 1834 it accepted an offer to rent a card room for their exclusive use, and at the same time the first newspaper was ordered for the use of members (25). It was a London paper, the *Globe*, and it was ordered for three months only beginning June, i.e. covering the active yachting season. One paper was insufficient for over one hundred members, and in 1835 the newspapers *Sun* and *Standard* were added (1 June - 1 Sept), together with the monthly *Nautical magazine* from January 1835, and BELL's *Life in London*.

In 1837 the Club moved to a new rented Clubhouse at the corner of Hobart St. and Buckingham Place, Stonehouse, near Millbay. Here, a proper newsroom was furnished and opened, containing a much enlarged lists of papers: *Times, Herald, Morning Chronicle, Standard, Sun, Telegraph, Hampshire Telegraph, Atlas , United Services Gazette, United Services Journal, Nautical Magazine,* and *Army* and *Navy Lists*. In 1840 the Newsroom was opened on Sundays for the use of members, who by that time included as elected honorary members, officers of the Royal Navy and Marines serving afloat and officers of the Army quartered in Plymouth, Devonport or Stonehouse. It seems a natural extension that about the end of 1838 the first steps were taken to form a Club Library. Several books were presented by members and others were promised, so it was ordered that a donor's register should be placed on the table of the Newsroom. The volumes were probably of a general nature, and the only title mentioned is a pre-1839 *Book of travels in Turkey, Greece and Asia Minor* , of which the author's name is not quoted. Each volume had a bookplate, the design which was based on the Club's flag (plain blue ensign and crown above).

Although it had been decided in 1845 to build a new clubhouse in Firestone Bay, nothing came of this plan; instead, the lease of the Clubhouse was purchased in 1849 and the Club remained there until 1866 when it moved to Elliot Terrace on the Hoe. In a publication dated about 1863 it is described as " ... containing an excellent News Room and Library" (26). According to Matthews, it was probably at this

time that many of the books were lost. In his chronology for 1852 he recorded that up to and for some years after that date, all books added to the Library were ordered to be purchased by Committee and were entered in minute books, but a great proportion had long disappeared, and probably many were lost when the Club moved from Millbay. He recalled that when he was elected a member of the Club, the Library was "a mere lumber room, without a carpet or chairs, and it was open to any member to take away any volume he desired." The old Library appears to have been neglected, but the new premises in Elliot Terrace were described in about 1880 as having "an extensive library, reading, and billiard rooms" (27). In 1882 Walker and Son were proud to advertise that they were binders to the Royal Western Yacht Club Library, amongst other Plymouth libraries (28).

Information on this Library is very sparse. Directories, guide books and histories do not help, nor was the library listed among the libraries of Plymouth described to the Library Association at its meeting in the Three Towns in 1901, although many minor libraries were mentioned. All records were destroyed when the Clubhouse on the Hoe was blitzed in World War II, and indeed it appears from the evidence of Matthews that many records had been lost by 1919. In default of other evidence, it seems that the Club's Library was probably a large general interest library in the middle decades of the nineteenth century when library provision was scarce. Perhaps the advent of public libraries, particularly reference libraries and magazine rooms, reduced the need to provide much literature at the Club apart from current books and periodicals of a specialist nature.

11.4 Society and Association libraries.

Some traces remain in the records of libraries and/or reading rooms connected with Christian and political associations.

The Plymouth YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION was founded in 1848, and it has been located on a number of different sites in the town. Eventually the main Hostel and records were destroyed in the Blitz, but a few stray references survive in newspapers and guidebooks. In January 1850 the annual general meeting received a report which included the statement that:

> "The members had access to a reading room, which was supplied with newspapers and 15 monthly religious or literary periodicals, and also to a circulating library comprising works of an unexceptionable and improving character." (29)

In 1888 the officers included the names of C.H. Ellis and E.L. Bennett as Librarians,(30), and during a laudatory speech at a Y.M.C.A. "At home" it was claimed, with local pride, that

"Their library was the best of any Y.M.C.A. outside London" (31).

In 1901, however, it was described by W.H.K. Wright as a "small library" (32); but that might have been in comparison with libraries of other types, and the "small library" might have been qualitatively good.

The Devonport and Stonehouse branch of the Y.M.C.A. had its librarians, J. Siddell in 1862 and R.D. Phillips in 1868 (33). In 1888 the new premises were opened in St. Aubyn St., and it was on that occasion that the President, Vice-Admiral Grant, presented several "excellent books", and the Vice-President, Sir John Puleston, M.P., gave several "valuable standard works" (34). It was considered that these would make a nucleus of a good library.

In 1895 the Plymouth and Devonport branches were advertising jointly that the Y.M.C.A. was open daily 10 a.m. - 10 p.m. and included reading rooms and libraries. Membership of the Association was 5s. p.a. (35). In 1889 the YOUNG WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION Devonport Branch was also advertising; its reading rooms in Chapel St. were open daily to subscribers and associates (36).

Towards the end of the nineteenth-century many political

organisations had come into being, many of which had reading rooms or libraries. In Devonport there were the CONSERVATIVE READING ROOMS as early as 1844, which were probably but not definitely conservative in the political sense (37). In 1880 the PLYMOUTH CONSERVATIVE ASSOCIATION and the PLYMOUTH LIBERAL ASSOCIATION READING ROOM were both listed in the classified directory under "Reading and Newsrooms" (38). The PLYMOUTH AND WESTERN COUNTIES LIBERAL CLUB possessed a collection of political books which were mentioned by Wright in 1901, and was therefore probably of a useful size (39).

The TEMPERANCE SOCIETY had reading rooms at the Temperance Hall at Millbay in 1852 (40), but although the Society continued at that address the reading rooms do not seem to be mentioned in later directories. The TEMPERANCE HALL in Fore St. Devonport did contain a reading and news-room in 1880, but it is not clear whether this was connected with the same Society (41).

11.5 Other libraries and newsrooms.

The last group of references relate mainly to the various organisations which sprang up in the Three Towns in connection with the welfare of servicemen and merchant seamen on leave. Perhaps it is not to be expected that the men on leave would wish to make much use of libraries, and if they did, the civilian library facilities were available, particularly after the public libraries were established in Plymouth in 1876 and Devonport in 1882. The few annual reports which have been found for the Plymouth Bethel Society, the Plymouth Sailors' Home, and other relevant bodies, have not yielded references to libraries and reading rooms, although that is no guarantee that some such facility did not exist.

The SAILORS' HOME at Devonport in about 1863 was described in about 1863 as being fitted out with every convenience, and the building contained a library (42). This institution was eclipsed by the work of Agnes Weston, "the sailors' friend" who opened the first SAILORS' REST at Devonport in about 1876. In 1883 it was described as containing a variety of facilities - reading, smoking, recreation and bathrooms - which were open to sailors, marines and soldiers (43). The foundation stone of an enlarged building was laid in 1888, when the plans were

described as containing reading rooms on the first floor (43).

Finally, a reference has been found to an institution which was devoted to work with soldiers instead of sailors. PLYMOUTH SOLDIERS' HOME AND INSTITUTE was established in Stonehouse as a branch of Miss Daniell's Aldershot Soldiers' Home. It was open all day to all ranks of soldiers in British service, and included a reading room with "all the morning, evening and weekly papers", and a lending library which contained "many well selected works" (44).

These stray pieces of information are tantalisingly slight, but when they are taken together with the libraries provided in the Army, Navy and Royal Marines, they do seem to indicate that it was not difficult for sailors, soldiers and marines to obtain access to newspapers, magazines, and books, from sources which were not available to the general public, and made them comparatively well catered for in terms of literature at least while they were in port and on shore, where they also had the advantage of civilian libraries and newsrooms.

CHAPTER TWELVE. CONCLUSIONS.

In Chapter 1 a number of specific aims were identified for this work, viz.:

> "Within the geographical and chronological limitations of the 1914 boundary of the City of Plymouth:
>
> 1. To discover the facts of library history.
> 2. To attempt to understand the causes and reasons behind the facts.
> 3. To relate the local library development very broadly to the national trends and regional developments of the different types of library.
> 4. To compare and contrast, in so far as this might prove feasible, the library provision made in the contiguous Three Towns, and to attempt to explain any significant differences which might be found."

The intervening ten chapters, consisting of some 550 pages, testify that the first aim has been fulfilled in a more abundant way than might have been anticipated in the circumstances of the destruction of so many primary sources and major collections in 1941. It has been possible to construct a broad picture of the local history of the establishment and development of libraries, although the details are often lacking. Most of these details are probably lost beyond recovery; but it is not impossible that a copy of the unlocated library catalogues and other publications, which are now known to have been produced, might turn up in currently unrecorded or inaccessible sources. Similarly, research by military and naval historians into their Services might eventually turn up some useful local sidelights on Army, Navy or Royal Marine libraries in the Three Towns. Library historians researching into the history of individual special libraries, leading to a national history of the individual types, should make it possible in future years to evaluate more closely the rating and importance of some of the libraries of the Three Towns which appear, from this study, to be among the earliest or most important of their type. However, it seems likely that any extra information from such sources will fill in the detail rather than invalidate the general pattern which will now be summarised.

The earliest libraries in the Three Towns began to appear at the end of the sixteenth-century; they were private libraries, and from 1600 onwards the evidence gradually increases about them. These early

libraries belonged mainly to gentlemen in the learned professions, such as the schoolmaster William Kemp, many medical men, and a few clergymen. Occasionally, too, a merchant or member of the gentry owned a collection of books. Often the wills referred to the books being "in my study", and several libraries were probably about 200 or more volumes in size; one library was stated by the testator to be more than 600 volumes. These libraries seem to have had some general religious and English works as well as professional literature. Their owners - the doctors, clergy, teacher, gentleman and merchants - were probably among the few people in the local community of the period to have not only the particular professional need for books, but also the money and the opportunity to acquire them, probably from London or the university towns. Most of the owners of these known private libraries lived in Plymouth, with an occasional reference to Stonehouse, but not to the Parish of Stoke Damerel in which Dock was later to be established.

The earliest public libraries have also been found in Plymouth. It is doubtful whether the donation of a book to St. Andrew's Church in 1598 can be interpreted as the existence of a parochial library, particularly as the Church records suggest that there could not have been more than about six books belonging to the Church some fifty years later. A more positive piece of evidence was the bequest by Peard in 1669 of £10 to found a library for the Corporation Grammar School. It might have been this collection of books which existed in a neglected state in 1699 and were briefly rescued from oblivion by Dr. Thomas Bray. He made an interesting attempt to use the collection as the nucleus of what he envisaged as a large library for public use; being located at a major seaport, he expected that it would be used not only by local gentry and clergy, but also visiting clergy such as missionaries en route for other destinations and the chaplains of naval ships. No attempt was made to further this plan in Plymouth after Bray left, and indeed there then follows a gap of about one hundred years before anything more emerges about the libraries of the Three Towns.

The emergence of Plymouth as the location of the earliest libraries in the Three Towns had been anticipated in Chapter 2, as a logical conclusion from the examination of the history and character of

each town and the factors expected to affect their library development; but it had seemed possible that they might have arisen earlier, for Plymouth had a complex urban settlement and was incorporated in 1439. However, no trace has been found of any local medieval library, although there were many small libraries in existence in Devon and Cornwall, including nearby Plympton and Tavistock. It seems likely that the Plymouth population was so deeply engaged in maritime occupations that it had little inclination towards a literary culture. During the medieval period, too, the area was subject to the maximum effect of geographical and cultural isolation from the centres of the book trade and university towns, and the procurement of books must have been quite difficult even after the introduction of printing. Even in the late sixteenth and seventeenth-centuries the impression is given in the wills of private library owners that the libraries were precious and hardly acquired, to be handed down from one generation to the next with due solemnity.

The re-emergence of libraries, after virtually one hundred years of silence about them, took place shortly before 1800. The local circumstances had changed considerably. Dock, which had been established in 1690 with the foundation of the Dockyard, had made slow growth for the first eighty or more years for a number of reasons, but from about 1775 there were improved conditions which made its rapid expansion possible, and by 1801 it had overtaken the population of the older town of Plymouth. It was, however, still a very young urban community, which had yet to acquire unity and the civic trappings. Stonehouse, too, had experienced a major population growth; this was partly because of the establishment by the Government of the Royal Naval Hospital and the Royal Marine Barracks, and partly because the improved communication between Plymouth and Dock via Stonehouse Bridge made Stonehouse a much more desirable dormitory area for the dockyard workers. Thus, by about 1800, the three urban communities were all in being. Library developments followed appropriately, and there were some quite significant differences between the Three Towns which can be attributed both to the local factors and to the interference of external factors. The library developments which arose from local inspiration and need will be considered first.

Stonehouse library history can be summed up quite rapidly,

for the settlement had very few libraries of its own initiation. It suffered from being the smallest of the Three Towns and it had no real cohesion, lacking municipal status. It was virtually a residential area, with mostly a dormitory population. The range of occupations of the inhabitants was very limited, Service or Dockyard, with hardly any commerce or industry of its own, and there was little to generate much library initiative. The civilian library provision at Stonehouse seems to have consisted initially of a small number of circulating libraries, which, however, seem generally to have had a longer and more stable existence than most of their counterparts in Plymouth and Devonport before 1850. This was probably because it contained a considerable number of leisured middleclass households connected with the Services which was likely to have provided a ready market for light reading. There was a fashionable private subscription reading room for newspapers and journals, but it seems to have vanished at about the time libraries began to be established by the Government for the Army, Navy and Royal Marines, from 1838 onwards, and there might have been some connection between the two events for officers were among the subscribers to the reading room. For their more serious reading, it is likely that Stonehouse middleclass readers joined one of the private subscription libraries in Plymouth or Devonport, for the population was too small to expect to establish and maintain such a library for its own use. For some years there was no literary organisation of any kind at Stonehouse, until an attempt was made in 1846 to found a Stonehouse Mechanics' Institute. This venture was supported mainly by young men and tradesmen, and foundered through lack of money in about 1853. From that time onwards it seems as if the residents of Stonehouse were dependent upon the library facilities in Plymouth and Devonport, which were both within easy walking distance. The composition of the population was changing, however, and in the second half of the nineteenth-century it was overwhelmingly working class, and the people were mostly living in badly overcrowded slum conditions. It is doubtful whether much of the population had a serious desire to read, although in the 1880s some enquiries were made about the possibility of extending the Plymouth Free Public Library service to Stonehouse; it was not followed up.

The main locally determined library developments of the Three Towns took place in Plymouth and Devonport, starting with circulating libraries. Circulating libraries were definitely present in Dock in 1792,

and Plymouth in 1809. It seems highly probable that circulating libraries were present much earlier, at least in Plymouth which had a more developed book trade, and the references do not suggest that the libraries had been established very recently; but this must be regretfully declared non-proven. Support for circulating libraries seems to have declined in Devonport after about 1850, but a few survived in Plymouth and lasted into the twentieth-century. By the last decades of the nineteenth-century Plymouth had become an easily reached shopping and commercial centre for the population of Stonehouse and Devonport, and probably its circulating libraries, set among the shops, were patronised by all Three Towns.

The earliest library apart from the circulating libraries was that of the Plymouth Medical Society, in 1794. It had the general appearance of a bookclub but almost immediately began to form a permanent collection of books and became a private subscription library with some kind of proprietary arrangements in the nineteenth-century. This Society was effectively an organisation which spanned the Three Towns, although a limit was set upon the number of members. All Three Towns were represented in the initial membership. Similarly the Plymouth Law Library, founded in 1815, was open to practitioners of the Three Towns. It was obviously difficult for professional men to obtain the specialised books and journals which were rapidly increasing in number, and the high prices also made it impossible for individuals to obtain adequate private professional libraries; collective purchase provided the answer. These middleclass men apparently found no difficulty in travelling between the Three Towns for their meetings and to use the Library; probably because they could afford a horse or carriage. Although the membership spanned the Three Towns, the libraries were housed in Plymouth, which was logical as the majority of professional men lived and practised there.

Plymouth and Devonport both have examples of private subscription libraries of the proprietary type. The Plymouth Proprietary Library was established in 1810 and is still in existence. Devonport's Public Library was established in 1827, was merged in 1830 to become the Devonport Civil and Military Library, and continued to about 1865 when it failed financially and was absorbed into the Devonport Mechanics' Institute. Both towns also had literary and philosophical libraries, but on this occasion Devonport was the earlier of the two, with its Dock Literary and Philosophical Society founded in 1808, disbanded 1821. The Plymouth Institution, founded 1812, is still in existence. Why did the Devonport

libraries fail and the Plymouth libraries survive? It is suggested that this can probably be attributed to the different composition of the middleclasses in each town. In Plymouth, the middle class consisted of a comparatively stable community of professional men, merchants and traders; at Devonport, the civilian middle class population was comparatively small, but there were many Army and Navy officers. The latter were less likely to make an expensive commitment of becoming a proprietor because of their general mobility, and their subscription membership was likely to be less dependable for the same reason; the support from the officers was probably also weakened by the establishment of Army and Navy libraries. All of these reasons probably made the libraries of Devonport a less stable proposition than their counterparts in Plymouth.

An interesting point to notice in connection with three of the libraries just mentioned is that their buildings were designed by the architect John Foulston, who had also designed the civic buildings of Plymouth and Devonport between about 1810 and 1830. Foulston designed the Athenaeum of the Plymouth Institution in classical style, the Devonport Civil and Military Library building (originally a school) in the Egyptian style, and the Plymouth Proprietary Library in another classical style. The design of the interior was very simple, with provision for library, reading room, committee room, librarian's rooms, and possibly a porter's lodge as well as the vestibule; the Athenaeum also had a museum. The buildings were considered interesting and were regarded with pride by their owners, as adding distinction to the towns.

As the nineteenth-century progressed there was an increasing need for library facilities for the working classes. Very little has come to light about the libraries of the small societies and working men's associations which formed from about 1850 onwards, but quite a lot is known about the first serious attempt to provide for the working man in the shape of Mechanics' Institutes. The first scheme was put forward in 1825, and was to form a united Institute for the Three Towns. The practical considerations of the undesirability of working men having to walk to lectures after a long day's work seem to have resulted in a final decision to establish separate institutes in Devonport and Plymouth, with Stonehouse being included with the Devonport Institute. Both organisations were founded in May 1825, and both had libraries from the beginning. Both suffered middleclass take-overs before 1850. Devonport suffered a financial collapse in 1880 due to its inability to pay interest

on building shares issued to pay for its new building in 1850; it was sold to the Council to become the new Devonport Free Library. The Plymouth Mechanics' Institute survived until 1899, when it merged with the Plymouth Institution, taking with it substantial funds which were used to build a general library for the amalgamated Institution. Once again Devonport was the first to suffer the collapse of its library, although it had enjoyed some very successful periods of history. In both cases the reason was basically a lack of support because of the proliferation of competing social and educational interests which had been established in the Three Towns. In Devonport, too, there were some members who actually wanted the demise of the Mechanics' Institute, because they wanted a public library to be established, having seen the success of the Plymouth Free Public Library.

An interesting successful working class venture which included a library was the Plymouth Mutual Cooperative and Industrial Society, founded in 1860. Although it was centred in Plymouth, where it had a central Library and Newsroom, it rapidly established retail outlets throughout the Three Towns, attached to some of which were branch newsrooms. This system seems in later years to have been adjusted to complement rather than duplicate the more recent branch newsrooms being established by the public libraries, and together they must have given facilities to a large number of people in the Three Towns.

The public libraries of Plymouth and Devonport provide an interesting contrast. Plymouth adopted the Acts in 1871, Devonport in 1880, and their respective services began in 1876 and 1882. In both cases the Acts were adopted with little opposition, because the advent of public elementary education had brought with it the recognition of the inevitable need for libraries for the general public, particularly the working class. Devonport had the "advantage" of starting with a functional building, purchased from the Mechanics' Institute; but it had very little money to buy new books until the building debt was cleared fifteen years later; the nucleus of its bookstock was the former Mechanics' Institute Library. Plymouth, by contrast, had an unsuitable building, the old Guildhall, for which it did not incur any debt, and it had a completely fresh bookstock to start with. Plymouth's library services were a great success from the start and continued to expand. Devonport was handicapped financially for many years, and when the cost

of the building had been discharged, the sum thus freed from the annual bookfund was partly taken up by the establishment of a museum and branch libraries, so that the bookstock received little refreshment in comparison with Plymouth's stock. Both Plymouth and Devonport established branch libraries in board schools, later moving to more suitable private locations after 1902. Plymouth established the first branch in 1892, Devonport in 1893; but Devonport went on to open what it claimed was the first fulltime branch in Devon and Cornwall, at St. Budeaux in 1899. Devonport's branch library record seems rather more stable than that of Plymouth, possibly because of the community pattern there; it had spread by absorbing existing nuclei of villages and other communities which formed community focal points; Plymouth's development had been more of a ribbon development in which the focus still remained in the centre of the town. Plymouth was successful in establishing a school library service in the board schools in 1888, but a similar scheme was not proposed in Devonport until 1904, by which time the Council was so concerned about the escalating costs of education that it seems to have referred the matter back, and nothing more was heard of the proposal.

All of the libraries summarised so far were established as the result of local factors, and the reality has been very much that which was anticipated in Chapter 2 as the logical expectation (vide p. 79-80). Plymouth does seem to emerge as having the longest library history, the most stable libraries, and a greater variety; Devonport comes next; and Stonehouse far behind them. However, some libraries were established in the Three Towns as the result of external factors which bear no relation to the resident population of the Three Towns. In Plymouth, there was the establishment by the Marine Biological Association of the United Kingdom of its Laboratory and Library on the Hoe in 1888. This library specialised exclusively on marine biology, and the stock was of little local interest or use outside its immediate community; but the Laboratory staff were often members and users of the Plymouth Institution and its Scientific Library which was the best scientific collection in the Three Towns. Another library which was imposed was that of the Western Academy which moved to Plymouth from Exeter as the result of pressure from outside the Three Towns; it was a theological college with a large theological library, which again made no impact outside its own immediate academic community. It moved to Bristol in 1901. A different kind of library which appeared in Plymouth as the result of outside influence was the

Cottonian Library, which was offered to several authorities before it was accepted by the Plymouth Proprietary Library, the proprietors agreeing to erect a special room to house it at their own cost.

The other libraries which were established by external factors were in Devonport and Stonehouse; these were the Government sponsored libraries of the Army, Navy and Royal Marines, which were founded in the period 1832-1842. They included the early Medical Library of the Royal Naval Hospital, the Divisional Library at the Royal Marine Barracks Stonehouse, the Garrison Library at the Raglan Barracks Devonport, regimental libraries, ships' libraries, and training ship libraries. Occasionally they had been preceded by private initiative, such as the Officers' Library at the Royal Marine Barracks. The discovery of this considerable provision of libraries for the exclusive use of the soldiers, sailors and marines, is important in the history of the libraries of the Three Towns, for servicemen formed a high percentage of the population. The establishment of these libraries in about 1840 and the gradual improvement of their contents and facilities during the rest of the period up to 1914 probably helps to explain the demise of civilian library facilties which had been supported by officers, such as the Devonport Civil and Military Library. There also existed at Devonport the Dockyard School Library which served the Government sponsored Dockyard School founded in 1844. At Stonehouse, it seems that the town's major contribution to library history of the Three Towns was an unconscious one; for not only did it have the Medical Library of the Royal Naval Hospital and libraries of the Royal Marine Barracks, but it also possessed the Royal William Victualling Yard which was completed in 1835; and this latter Government institution was one of the three main agencies through which ships' libraries were provided to the Fleet from 1838 onwards. That "hidden" library agency function was probably more important over its long period of operation than the overt libraries of Stonehouse.

It will have been seen from this brief review that there were differences in the types of libraries and the degree of success of similar libraries between the Three Towns, and that these differences can be explained quite readily in terms of the different factors influencing each town. Consequently, each town had a particular library character of its own, instead of the homogeneity which might have been

expected in such a small geographical area. Plymouth had the longest history of libraries, the most stable libraries, and good examples of the major types of library except those of the Navy and Royal Marines. Devonport's civilian libraries were less successful than those of Plymouth because of community differences; but Devonport was important for its military and naval libraries, its Dockyard School Library, and the Devonport Training School for Engineer Students' Library. Stonehouse, with little civilian library provision, was important for the Medical Library of the Royal Naval Hospital, the Divisional Library of the Royal Marine Barracks, and the library agency function of the Victualling Yard.

A few more general points can also be drawn from the study. Occasional pieces of evidence from the rules of the larger libraries suggest strongly that the catchment area from which the library members were drawn did gradually expand in the nineteenth-century, and this can be explained in terms of the improvement of communication links and the ease of travel in the area. This evidence is sometimes implicit rather than explicit, but the interpretation seems clear; for example, in the early years of the Plymouth Proprietary Library it was considered necessary to allow a reader an extra day to read a book if he lived at Devonport and Stonehouse, or two extra days if he lived more than two miles away. Clearly this suggests that local travel was not quick and easy; but by 1876 the Library was ruling that a Stranger had to live more than twelve miles away, implying that there was no hardship to members who lived up to that distance away. The Borough Librarian, in considering the problem of non-resident borrowing before 1892, believed that the Plymouth natural catchment area extended for several miles' radius around the town, including across the rivers. The improvement of transport and communication should have made it possible to established united libraries for the Three Towns and beyond, and this was in fact the logical outcome of the amalgamation of the Three Towns in 1914, in which W.H.K. Wright became Librarian of the new County Borough of Plymouth which encompassed the Devonport Free Public Library and the library-less Stonehouse.

It was noted in Chapter 2 that ladies outnumbered men in the population analyses, and that a high percentage of them were not in employment. This suggests that ladies must have formed a large part of the potential library users. What kind of provision was there

for them? At first, very little apart from the circulating libraries. Ladies were among the members of the early Dock Literary and Philosophical Society, but they were not admitted to the Plymouth Institution until the middle of the nineteenth-century (largely, it was believed, due to Mr. Woollcombe's dislike of having ladies present at the meetings), although they could be invited to exhibitions and conversationes. At the Plymouth Proprietary Library ladies were not allowed to use the Newsrooms until about 1870, although they were entitled to become proprietors; many ladies owned shares as the result of inheritance, but it seems to have been 1853 before a lady actually purchased a share in her own name. The Mechanics' Institutes were much more liberal, and were heavily patronised by the ladies; Hudson estimated in 1851 that about half of the members of Plymouth Mechanics' Institute were ladies. There seems to be no evidence of the ladies of the Three Towns following the lead of the ladies of Penzance and Powder and establishing their own bookclubs or libraries.

It is quite noticeable that the Three Towns lacked a major benefactor of its own, although many of its prominent civic and social leaders gave material assistance to libraries by their subscriptions, donations, assistance with loans, and similar help. The townsfolk had to achieve most of what they wanted through their own resources. Although there was no major local benefactor, there were a few men whose names stand out particularly clearly as contributing to the establishment and development of local libraries. The most important of these was probably Henry Woollcombe, through whose endeavours the Plymouth Institution and Library were founded, the Plymouth Law Library was founded, and he was an influential member of the Plymouth Proprietary Library although the general credit goes to Charles Eastlake. Later in the century, Alfred Rooker was instrumental in promoting the public library movement with Mr. Serpell; John Shelly and the Rev. F.E. Anthony were usually to be found in connection with each of the major libraries, and many other names emerge which suggest that extensive work on the biography of prominent nineteenth-century townsfolk might lead to further discoveries in terms of the details of how matters were influenced behind the scenes.

Although some interesting detail has emerged on the evolution of the practical librarianship of the non-public libraries, it has

normally shown that they were typical of their time, and nothing has come to light of exceptionally advanced practice or unique method. The librarianship of the Borough Librarian of Plymouth, W.H.K. Wright, is worth looking at more closely, for he introduced into Plymouth Free Public Library the most advanced practices of the time, and was not afraid to experiment. He was not necessarily the first to implement various services or techniques, but by a judicious choice of methods he aimed to provide a service which would give the best to the public he served. The quality and nature of the Plymouth services were soon in the professional forefront, and Plymouth enjoyed perhaps its highest reputation in professional circles during his librarianship. Among the particular features associated with Wright are: the use of a special form of indicator-catalogue he designed himself; the early use of the Index-catalogue method of Crestadoro; the professional apprentice scheme; the use of board schools for branch libraries; the development of school libraries in board schools, and the refinement of class visits to the Central Library for library instruction; and the foundation of a notable local history library. He presented papers to the Library Association Annual Conferences on most of those themes, and was recognised as an innovator. It was a compliment to Wright as well as to the Three Towns generally that the Library Association Conference visited Plymouth in 1885 and 1901, an honour not accorded even to several provincial capitals at that time; it suggests that his contemporaries believed the Three Towns had libraries of professional interest, and particularly the public library service which the Library Association was endeavouring to promote.

That point leads to the summing up of the place of the Three Towns libraries in the wider perspective of regional and national library developments generally.

At the regional level, i.e. taking Devon and Cornwall as the region, the Three Towns have a record of many libraries which were the leaders, either by being first, or by being the best, or by influencing other libraries. The Dock Literary and Philosophical Society was the first to be founded in Devon; and the Plymouth Institution was second. The Plymouth Proprietary Library was only the fourth in Devon and Cornwall, but outlived the others. The Mechanics' Institutes were said at the time of their foundation to be the first west of London. The Cooperative Society was the first and largest in the Southwest. The Plymouth

Free Public Library was the second to be established in Devon, but soon outstripped Exeter in service and reputation, and was influential, through W.H.K. Wright, in establishing other libraries in Devon and Cornwall, such as at Torquay and Newton Abbot. The Plymouth Medical Society and Plymouth Law Society were the first in the region. The military and naval libraries seem to have been unparalled in the region.

This creditable recordof the libraries of the Three Towns also has something to offer in the framework of the national history of libraries. The Three Towns contained libraries which were among the earliest of their type: Plymouth Medical Society can be argued to be the first of its type on certain criteria, but definitely one of the earliest; similarly, the Plymouth Law Library; the Dock Literary and Philosophical Society was an early example; the Medical Library of the Royal Naval Hospital, together with Haslar, was in the forefront of medical library provision outside of teaching hospitals. The Three Towns also contained certain libraries which were good examples of little known types of library, although not necessarily the earliest largest, or best of their type. One of these was the Plymouth Cooperative Mutual and Industrial Society Library, which was one of the longest-lived and one of the largest. The others which are also considered to be important are the libraries of the Army, Navy, Royal Marines, and Dockyard School, which perhaps provide an almost unparalled complex of Armed Service libraries, together with the major agency of the Victualling Office.

For all of these reasons it is considered that the study of the history of libraries in Plymouth to 1914 has shown that the libraries were significant in local, regional and national contexts, and that they, and the Borough Librarian W.H.K. Wright, deserve to be better known in the professional literature of library history.

PLAN OF PLYMOUTH

Produced & Published by
"GEOGRAPHIA" Ltd 55 FLEET STREET, LONDON, E.C.4.

REFERENCE

- Railways and Stations ..... FRIARY
- Corporation Tramway Routes
- Corporation Bus Routes
- City Boundary

Divided into half mile squares.

Scale 0 ½ 1 MILE

INDEX TO STREETS.

ADDENDA

Based upon the Ordnance Survey Maps with the sanction of the Controller of H.M. Stationery Office with additions & corrections by local Authorities.

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Map 5. The County Borough of Plymouth, c. 1939, showing the 1914 Boundary, and containing a street index.

Reproduced by Devon County Library Services from a plan published by Geographia Ltd.

A TRVE MAPP AND DISCRIPTION OF THE TOWNE of Plymouth and the Fortifications thereof, with the workes and approaches of the Enemy at the last Seige: A° 1643

pars

Saltic Ash

Saltash Passage

St Stephens

Enemy

The River of Lmer

Corn

St Budocks

Weston mills

Ham

Penne Crose

Keame

Stoke

Enemy

Hamwose

Enemy

Drakeswater

Sr Francis

Eg Bucland

Enemy

Enemy

Compton

Lipson mill

Hawdyn

Holiwell

Lipson

Lipson mill work

Penycomquic

St George

drawbridge

Spurr

Charles fort

Tenour

drawbridge

Spurr

Resolution fort

PLYMOUTH

Maudenhead

Eastgate

Leery pond work

The Leeree

Plymton mane

Newworke

Stonehouse

Mount Wise

Inisworth

The River of Tamar

Mulbrook

Blockehouse

Passage point

Passage forte

Mill Bay

The hoe of Plymouth

Castle

Fort

Fishers nse

Catdowne

Catdowne worke

Princes Battlework

Wallie

Crimel Passage

Mountedgcomb

Enemy

Maker

S Nicholas Iland

Calwater

Oston

Enemie

Enemy

Plymstock

Radford

Cawson

Penlee

Plymouth Sounde

A Scale of Miles

1 2 3

W Hollar fecit

Rame head

Wenburie

Map 1. The Three Towns area at the time of the Civil War, 1643.

A reproduction published by Devon County Library Services, from an original in the British Library.

MAP OF PLYMOUTH, DEVONPORT, STONEHOUSE, STOKE, MORICE TOWN, & FORD.

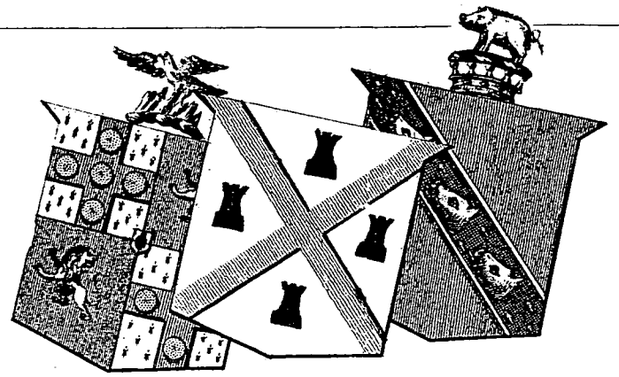
LITHOGRAPHED & PUBLISHED BY W H MADDOCK, TREVILLE ST

6 INCHES TO A MILE.

FORD
KEYHAM
Keyham Lake
KEYHAM YARD
NORTH BASIN
SOUTH BASIN
MORICE TOWN
OUTLAND
MILEHOUSE
UNDERHILL
STOKE BURYING GROUND
BLOCK HOUSE
STOKE
DEVONPORT PARK
DEVONPORT
DOCK YARD
MAST POND
MOUNT WISE
MUTTON COVE
TAMAR CANAL
FERRY CANAL
MILL CREEK
MILITARY HOSPS.
NAVAL HOSPITAL
STONEHOUSE POOL
STONEHOUSE
GT WESTERN DOCKS.
MILL BAY
MILL BAY PIER
WESTWARD PIER
EASTERN KING PT
WESTERN KING PT
DEVILS PT
ROYAL WILLIAM YARD
CREMYLL FERRY
MT EDGCUMBE
PLYMOUTH
STONEHOUSE &
DEVONPORT CEMETERY
HYDE PARK
FREEDOM FIELDS
NORTH ROAD
JOINT STN
SUTTON HARBOUR
THE HOE
CITADEL
HOE PARK
HALF HOURLY STEAMERS TO ORESTON
DEADMANS BAY
CATTEWATER
PLYM R.
BATTEN BREAKWATER
MT. BATTEN
CASTLE
COAST GD.
RIVER TAMAR
HAMOAZE.

Map 4. The Three Towns in 1881, by W. H. Maddock.
Reproduced by Devon County Library Services.

COOKE'S STRANGER'S GUIDE, OR POCKET PLAN of the three Towns OF PLYMOUTH, DEVONPORT, AND STONEHOUSE.



Pub.d Oct.r 1.st 1827 by John Cooke 82 Union Street Stonehouse Pom.o Pr. 1/6.d — Ent.d at Stationers Hall

Scale of One Mile — ¾ — ½ — ¾ — One Mile

HAMOAZE

MOUNT EDGCUMBE

PLYMOUTH SOUND

WILLIAM BAY

CATWATER

Magazine

MORICE TOWN

Barracks

HIGHER STOKE

Moons Corn

Ferry

TORPOINT

Ferry

Mariners Church

Marlboro' Sq.

Granby Sq.

STOKE

North George

Stoke Church

Frederick Sq.

Fitzroy Sq.

Clarence Sq.

Chamberlain Sq.

Millbay Hospital

Stonehouse Mills

Boom House

Portland Sq.

Tanners Yard

Woodside

DEVONPORT

Mount Stone

Grenville

Admiralty House

Ground

Mutton Cove

Mc Backwell's Bath

New Hospital

Theatre

Assembly Rooms

Post Office

Custom House

Exchange

Market

Guildhall

Town Hall

Prison

Theatre

Turnpike

Devonshire Terrace

NEW ROAD

The Gas Works

Norley Ho.

Beaumont Ho.

Bellair

Mt Pleasant

Long Room

Government Ground in Hand

Old Guildhall or Devils Point

St Nicholas or Drake's Island

Dock Yard

Sutton Pool

Water Lane

Charles Pl.

Rope Walk

Dartmoor Rail-Road

Earl Morley's New Road

Turnpike Gate

Oreston

Plymstock

Madeira Pl.

Coxside

Coxside Quay

Oats-Walk

Bowling Green

Fore Barn

Beaumont Bay

Quarries

Batten

Batten-chapel

Map 2. The Three Towns in 1827.

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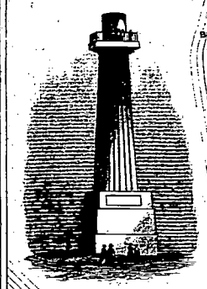
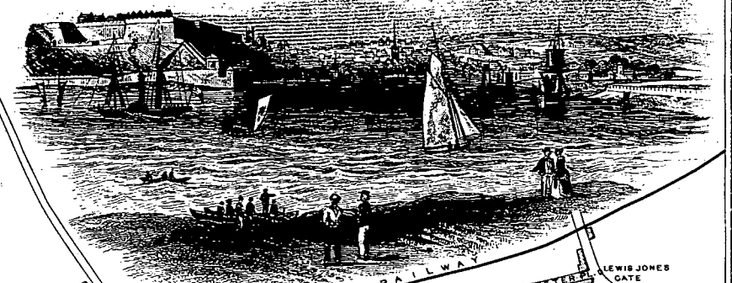
COOKE's *Stranger's guide*.

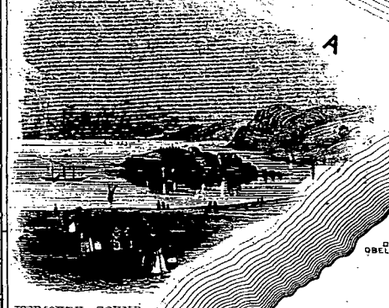
PLYMOUTH, DEVONPORT AND STONEHOUSE.



THE COLUMN



PLYMOUTH BORO PRISON



PLYMOUTH SOUND

The Illustrations, Drawn & Engraved by H. Bibby.

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The Plan, Drawn & Engraved by J. Rapkin

Map 3. The Three Towns in 1860.

A reproduction by Devon County Library Services from a plan by J. Rapkin.

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Library in 1882. It does seem very likely that the low fiction issue percentage is correct, and that the reason was that the readers had virtually exhausted the stock.

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33. ibid., 120
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37. ibid., 22 February 1893.

38. M.B.A. *Agenda and reports,* 27 January 1897.

39. ibid., 19 May 1897.

40. ibid., 26 October 1898.

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47. The obituary for Miss A.R. Clark in *J.M.B.A.* 24, 1940, 459 was:

" Amy Rose Clark entered the service of the Marine Biological Association as clerk and typist in 1905. For a number of years she was in charge of the accounts which she kept with extreme care and accuracy, and throughout the whole of her service she acted as confidential clerk to the Director.

She also gradually undertook more work in connexion with the Library, and it was here that she chiefly came in contact with the scientific workers, who learned to value the ready help which she always gave them. The present extensive card catalogue is largely the result of her efforts. She had a remarkable memory for individual books, periodicals and even author's reprints and their positions on the shelves. She was quick too in dealing with second-hand booksellers' catalogues, discovering in what journals individual reprints had appeared, and whether or not they were already in the Library. Her work in this direction has done much to complete our literature on the different groups.

For twenty years Miss Clark has also taken a share in the scientific work, helping Mrs. Sexton in caring for, examining and recording observations on living *Gammarus* which were being used in genetic work. She was a most careful observer, whose work could always be relied upon for thoroughness and accuracy. By her death, on August 12, 1939, the Plymouth Laboratory has suffered a great loss, which will be felt by all who have worked there."

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